

DOCTORAL THESIS

**Compliment production and compliment responses in immersion and non-immersion environments
Saudi English learners**

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Compliment Production and Compliment Responses in Immersion and Non-immersion
Environments: Saudi English Learners

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

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Abstract

This thesis makes an original contribution to the existing literature on intercultural communication, politeness and teaching English as a foreign language, by investigating compliment production and compliment responses in Saudi English learners and British English native speakers.

Data were collected through the use of open-ended discourse completion questionnaires from a total of 463 respondents divided into three groups of university students as follows: Saudi students in a non-immersion environment in Saudi Arabia (Saudi KSA), Saudi students in an immersion environment in the UK (Saudi UK) and British English native speakers (British NS). The data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively based on Yuan's (2002) and Holmes' (1986) taxonomies of compliments and compliment responses. The results show that, in specific situations, there were significant differences between the scores of the two Saudi groups in terms of their strategy use.

In the case of compliment production, Saudi KSA respondents used explicit compliments and enhanced rapport through exaggeration and expanding on compliments. Saudi UK respondents tended to use explicit compliments or opt out of situations, while British native speakers used explicit compliments and notably, information questions. There was a tendency to use redressive actions across groups in some situations, influenced by variables such as social distance and power. In the case of compliment responses, Saudi UK respondents accepted compliments more than their peers in KSA. Saudi KSA respondents used deflection and shifted credit more, employing a larger number of religious and cultural references that reflect Saudi social norms. British participants tended to accept compliments or respond to compliments by giving information. It is recommended

that English instructors in KSA, in their classrooms and curriculum design, highlight the differences between Saudi and British complimenting behaviour. This may contribute to improving learners' intercultural communicative competence.

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اهدي لكم رساله الدكتواره.

ابنتكم الصغرى الدكتورة ساره العمري

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Abbreviations

B and L= Brown and Levinson Theory

British NS =British English Native speakers

C = a compliment

CCSARP= Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project

CR = a compliment response

D = Social Distance

DCTs= Discourse completion tasks

EFL=English as a Foreign Language

ELT= English Language Teaching

FTA = Face-threatening Acts

GPS = Grand Politeness Strategy

H= hearer

ILP= Interlanguage Pragmatics

KAU= King Abdulaziz University

L1= Mother Tongue/First language

L2 = Second Language/Target Language

MDCT= Multiple Choice Discourse Completion Task

NNS =Non-Native Speakers

NSs= Native Speakers

NVivo= Qualitative data analysis computer software package

O =other speakers

P = Power

PP= Politeness Principle

R =The degree of imposition S= speaker

SAT= Speech Act Theory

Saudi KSA = Saudis in non-immersion environment

Saudi UK = Saudis in immersion environment

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

SPSS= statistical package for social sciences(statistical analysis program)

TEFL= Teaching English as a foreign language

TESOL= Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The two facets of complimenting behaviour, giving a compliment and responding to a compliment, in context, can potentially highlight many functions of compliment speech acts as both positive and face-threatening act. Compliment behaviour has both a surface meaning and a deeper meaning and can be interpreted very differently. The film ‘when Harry met Sally’ (1989), which follows the life of ordinary people and conversations between acquaintances, illustrates some of the ways in which complimenting behaviour occurs in context. The lines below are taken from the film transcript:

- Harry 00:33:39 You were just so uptight then. You're much softer now.
- Sally 00:33:43 I hate that kind of remark. It sounds like a compliment, but it's an insult.
- Harry 00:33:44 OK, you're still as hard as nails.

In the lines above, Harry is assumed to be offering Sally a positive compliment Sally on how much more relaxed she seemed than before. Sally, however, takes this as an insult, despite the use of a seemingly positive semantic expression (i.e. softer). Although the viewer may feel that it reflects reality, Sally does not like the compliment and so Harry’s intention to enhance their rapport through complimenting her backfires because she feels insulted. This dialogue illustrates how the surface meaning (locutionary meaning) of a compliment was perceived negatively through interpreting its hidden meaning or force (illocutionary meaning) and then the response was based on the effect of the compliment (perlocutionary meaning). These concepts are explored in chapter 2.

Social and contextual factors such as relationships are fundamental in understanding everyday communication. The film dialogue above took place between two fairly well-acquainted people

who speak and share the same language and cultural background, yet the compliment was understood as an insult despite the use of positive semantic expressions. This could be much more complicated if speakers were not close or did not share the same mother tongue or cultural background. The influence of social variables such as social distance, power as well as topic is crucial in all sorts of communication, particularly intercultural communication. These concepts will be explored in chapters 2 and 3 with regard to theory and the scholarly literature.

As suggested earlier, complimenting behaviour is heavily context and culture dependent. For example, in Middle Eastern and Islamic societies, ‘there exists the belief that a compliment can attract the ‘evil eye’ unless it is accompanied by expressions that invoke God's protection’ (Ramajo Cuesta ,2015, p.131). Surah al-Falaq, one of the most important chapters in the Qur'an, is known to be recited whenever people seek to avoid harmful evil spirits. The lines of this chapter are as follows:

1. *Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn*
2. *From the mischief of created things;*
3. *From the mischief of Darkness as it overspreads;*
4. *From the mischief of those who practise secret arts;*
5. *And from the mischief of the envious one as he practises envy.*

(Saheeh, I.,1997, p.914)

The concept of envy provoking the evil eye, which is a crucial belief and part of Muslim culture, is reflected in lines 4 and 5 above where the dangers of ‘secret arts’ and ‘envy’ are highlighted, and (in line 1) protection by God (‘the Lord of the Dawn’) invoked.

These lines are supposed to be recited whenever there is potential for envy and is associated to the concept of the ‘evil’ eye. The ‘evil eye’ concept illustrates this point and it exists in all Arabic

dialects. As Cuesta (2015,p.132) explains, it is an important cultural pattern that compliments or words of praise are accompanied by a deferential reference to God, because such statements ‘are taken as bad omens which bring misfortune’ (Harrell *et al* , 2003, p.352 cited in Cuesta, 2015).It is also considered taboo to Arabs to openly admire others’ possessions because they ‘may feel obliged to give them to you’ (Lewis 2010, p.96). For this reason, giving a compliment or responding to a compliment about one’s possessions is a face-threatening act within Arab communities. The same can be said about compliments on achievements and abilities; this has influenced the responses given in the situations investigated in this study as well as in previous studies.

The ability to communicate successfully depends on socio-pragmatic competence (speaking in a way that is appropriate in the social and cultural context) and pragma-linguistic competence (using the correct linguistic form) in delivering a speech act in that context. Some of these pragmatic abilities are strongly influenced by social values and beliefs and some are not. These concepts will be explored in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

1.2 Rationale

This thesis investigates the pragmatic competence of Saudi learners of English when complimenting and responding to compliments. The research aims to make a comparison between the cultural norms and pragmatic strategies used by Saudi learners of English in immersion and non-immersion environments, thus extending our knowledge of speech act realisations in different cultural contexts. By looking at the ways in which compliments are conceptualised in British and Saudi cultures, the study aims to illustrate the influence of an immersion environment on the strategies used by Saudi learners of English when giving and receiving compliments. This will provide valuable understanding about the difficulties Saudi learners of English can face when involved in these speech acts.

1.3 Research questions

This research aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of Saudi learners' complimenting behaviour in English?
2. Does this complimenting behaviour differ between the two groups of Saudi learners of English (Saudi UK and Saudi KSA), and between these two Saudi groups and native speakers of English?

If so, how?

3. What are the possible reasons behind the use of social and religious references in compliment strategies?

1.4 Contribution of the current study

The first contribution this study makes is to analyse and compare two related speech acts (compliment production and compliment responses) and explore cross cultural and linguistic similarities or differences between two groups of Saudi students and native speakers of English. This has not been done before in any previous study on compliments and so this study adds to the limited intercultural studies of Saudi English learners. By comparing one Saudi student group studying English in their home country and one studying English in the UK, the research is able to fill a knowledge gap regarding the possible effect of an immersion environment on students' speech acts in their second language. Specifically, this study examines the effect that living in an immersion environment might have on how Saudi English learners produce and respond to compliments. The strategies used are analysed not only at the semantic level but also with regard to any underpinning cultural factors.

In terms of its contribution to theory, the thesis demonstrates that, though existing literature has shown a tendency to incorporate first generation theories such as Leech's politeness principle, politeness theory and Grice's maxims, no study has made a serious attempt to consider different

views using rapport-management (Spencer-Oatey, 2008) to explain compliments in the Saudi context.

In order to contextualise the current project, the first group of frameworks, i.e. politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987), speech act theory (Searle, 1969), and Leech's principles of politeness (Leech, 1983, 2005, 2016) will be discussed before moving on to the second group of theories, namely Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport-management framework and its relevance to intercultural communication (Scollon and Scollon, 2011). The decision to incorporate intercultural communication and rapport-management models as analytical frameworks emerged from identifying the shortcomings of politeness theory with regard to the research questions this study poses. Politeness theory is used to categorise and describe the strategies employed by the participants, whereas intercultural communication theory is used to explain the strategic choices respondents make in intercultural situations in terms of power and social distance. Rapport-management is used to explore sociality rights and norms that may be behind respondents' preferences.

This thesis also contributes to the study of intercultural communication by recommending extending the knowledge of one's own culture as well as being aware of others' culture in order to acquire the social skills that are crucial in global communication. Intercultural communication studies increase the awareness of the importance of cultural identity and recognising one's own social beliefs and values.

Finally, the present study is motivated by its potential applications in the field of English language teaching. Previous investigations into Arabic compliment behaviour have been conducted in the field of cross-cultural studies, but there is a need to describe complimenting behaviour from a

different angle and to consider complimenting behaviour in English in intercultural settings. This will make the findings useful for pedagogical purposes. A focus on speech act behaviour is particularly important for teachers of English in Saudi Arabia as it can raise teacher awareness of the importance of teaching pragmatics, as one of the challenging areas of communication for language learners.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of 8 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, the rationale for the study, research questions and the contribution of the study. Chapter two presents the theoretical background of the study and important concepts in the fields of pragmatics and politeness. Chapter 3 offers an overview of the scholarly related papers closely related to the study and the outcome of these studies. Chapter 4 presents the research methodology and covers topics relating to sampling, data collection and data analysis methods. The results of the pilot studies conducted at the beginning of this research process are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter 5 presents the results and the analysis of compliment production. Chapter 6 presents the data relating to compliment responses and chapter 7 presents the analysis of compliment responses data in light of previous studies and the theoretical frameworks that underpin the research. Finally, chapter 8 presents conclusions and draws some implications from the findings. It also outlines the limitations of the research and makes suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical background of the study. It offers an overview of the most influential theories and frameworks in the field that relate to this study and its findings. The chapter starts with an overview of the topic and field of study. It then goes on to introduce speech act Theory (SAT), the concept of face, politeness theory, criticisms of politeness theory and Leech's politeness principle (first wave theories). Then, it moves on to second wave theories, such as Spencer-Oatey's rapport-management framework, with its attention to the differing norms and conventions in different cultures (intercultural communication). The second part of the chapter discusses related concepts in second language acquisition (SLA) and cross-cultural studies: Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), pragmatic transfer, pragmatic failure and the noticing hypothesis.

2.2 An Overview of the field

Pragmatics is a branch of Linguistics that focuses on using language in context. Competent learners of a foreign language have a solid background in using grammar, syntax and lexical items, but using language in a given context can still be challenging. Meanings of words can be altered, changed, downgraded or upgraded in a given context, and rules of grammar are not enough to explain this phenomenon which occurs in ordinary everyday conversation. In particular, speech acts, such as requesting and apologising, complimenting and responding to compliments, may be formulated differently in different cultures and across different languages.

Although pragmatics can be seen as a skill that is acquired in context, many argue that pragmatics

should be treated as a fundamental part of any language teaching curriculum, along with the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Ishihara and Cohen, 2014; Pullin, 2015).

Scollon and Scollon (2001p.30) explain that ‘shared knowledge of grammar is essential for effective communication; shared knowledge of context is effective for successful communication’.

The current study is a detailed investigation of two speech acts, namely, complimenting and responding to compliments. In order to understand how speech acts function, we need to consider Austin’s speech act theory and how this was developed by Searle. This is the subject of the following section.

2.3 Speech act theory

Crystal defines pragmatics as the study of ‘factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choices on others’ (Crystal 2012, p.120). Yule (1996p.3) also defines pragmatics as ‘the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener’. This means that linguistic competence can be achieved by understanding linguistic form alongside the function of an utterance in context. An utterance is the pairing of a sentence with its context (Levinson 1983; 18).

Pragmatics emerged from the philosophy of language introduced by Austin. It focuses on speaking as doing, and how we produce utterances. Austin’s (1975) introduced his speech act theory with the appearance of his most influential papers on *how to Do Things with Words*. He argues that when we speak, we perform actions and that some utterances are in themselves acts. Austin thus called these utterances performatives rather than conveyers of information. In his description of speech acts, he argues that each speech act has three dimensions: a *locutionary act*, which is the act of uttering something; an *illocutionary act*, which is associated with the force of the utterance that can be expressed as a performative such as ‘promising’; and a *perlocutionary act*, which is the effect that the illocutionary act has on the hearer who has to identify the speaker’s illocutionary intention.

Continuing the work of Austin, Searle (1969) developed the 'Theory of Speech Act' and introduced five types of general functions performed by speech acts: Declarations, assertive, expressive, directives, and commissive (p.10- 12). According to Searle (1969), compliment and compliment responses are expressive acts that show the speaker's state of mind. These speech acts are not intended for exchanging information, but for expressing admiration, pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow. In Saudi Arabia, the three dimensions of a speech act can be seen as triangulation in complimenting behavior, comprising the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary effects of compliments. For example, a Saudi English learner who says '*MashAllah* you have a nice house' is using a correct English structure, but the addition of *MashAllah* means that the learner does not want the force and effect of this compliment to be misunderstood.

The force can be that this person wishes to avoid appearing envious, so that the effect of this compliment is not harmful. A person from a completely different culture such as the UK, would not understand that *MashAllah* is not only a religious word in this context, but has a hidden force and an important effect. In Saudi Arabia, complimenting possessions (e.g. sunglasses) puts an imposition on the complimentees to gift the possession as a ritualistic traditional act of goodwill and generosity. Although this response is not inevitable, the example illustrates how the act of complimenting or responding to a compliment is potentially a face-threatening act, and is an example of the complex force and effect that can be underneath a simple surface meaning (e.g. admiring someone's sunglasses). Thus, in the reverse scenario where the Saudi English learner is receiving a compliment, which is made without a protective word, on something that is highly valued, the compliment can be taken negatively, and this can have a potentially negative effect on the hearer. A learner might be able to formulate an utterance correctly from a grammatical, locutionary, and pragma-linguistic point of view but the intention (socio-pragmatic or illocutionary force) may be different according to the cultural context. Interlanguage Pragmatics can be therefore

understood as the study of the illocutionary elements (intentions) of the speaker and how these might differ across cultures. The following section discusses the ways that compliments can be viewed from the perspective of different theories of politeness, face and rapport-management.

2.4 The concept of face

The concept of face was first introduced and defined by the sociologist Goffman (1967) as 'The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact' (1967, p. 5). Face is one's social image which can be perceived, lost or gained in human social interactions. Goffman (1959) was the first to identify a connection between self and others and how public self-image contributes to understanding social interactions. He explained (p.7) that while concern with face focuses the attention of the person on the current activity, in order to maintain one's place in this activity, the attention needs to be given to one's place in the social world beyond. Face originally is a positive social value, but what people want to achieve in interaction is not always maintained by others.

In his concept of face, Goffman (2005) addressed cultural diversity and noted that some actions are habitual and culturally unique because each culture has its own 'characteristic repertoire of face-saving practices' p.13. Therefore, the concept of saving face is a practice, but is not the centre of the social interactions because not all people would practice that. Goffman explains face-work as referring to the 'actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face' (Goffman 1967, p.12). In line with this, self-image does not always stem from individuals but has its roots in society and religion. For example, complimenting a house can be a face-threatening act unless it is used in conjunction with protective words in Muslim countries.

Bargiela-Chiappini (2003, p.146) explained that the concept of face presented by Goffman was not 'intended for application to inter-cultural communication, but rather to cast some light on important

aspects of (intra-cultural) interpersonal behaviour'. Face-work was seen to contribute to understanding politeness behaviour (such as that studied by Brown and Levinson (1987) particularly in comparing native and nonnative use of L2 and their face wants and needs. According to Bargiela-Chiappini (2003), face cannot affect self-image in some societies where there are complex social obligations, statuses and power. (p.1455). Face-work and politeness are fundamental concepts when analysing the relationship between language use and social context: both form the social approach of pragmatic studies. Pragmatics includes the exploration of politeness as being polite is associated with maintaining or promoting social harmony among people (Culpeper, 2011, p.2). One form of politeness is paying and responding to, compliments: this is the focus of this study.

The following section is a discussion of politeness theory.

2.4.1 Politeness: Brown and Levinson's theory

When we communicate, we act, and we do things with words. Some of these words (acts) are threatening to people who do not speak the same language or come from a different cultural background, even if those acts are made with good intentions. Compliments are a case in point. For example, compliments that are polite in English can be very face-threatening in Arabic, as the previous examples show.

How to preserve someone's face wants involves two important concepts: face-threatening acts and politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987) introduced the concept of 'face-saving,' in their theory of politeness, which is considered to be one of the most influential theories in pragmatics and speech acts studies (Song, 2017). How to maintain a positive face or avoid a negative face threat to generate politeness strategies to avoid or minimise the effect of what is called face-threatening acts

(FTA) has been the topic of numerous studies.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model was loosely based on Goffman's concept of face (1967). In Brown and Levinson's theory, the definition of face becomes 'the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself' (1987p. 62). They argue that there are two faces to take into consideration: one is positive face, involving the hearer's desire to be liked by others, and the other is negative face, which is the hearer's desire not to be imposed on. Politeness comes into existence with the other's face needs in mind: a speech act can threaten the other's 'negative face', their wish to be left unimpeded, or their 'positive face', their wish to be appreciated; the speaker chooses politeness 'strategies' according to the other's perceived face needs.

Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasise that every adult member of a society knows that:

- a) face is 'something that is emotionally invested and can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction' (p.61):
- b) aspects of rational behaviour include 'the ability to weigh up different means to an end and choose the best means that satisfies the desired goal' (p.65).

Politeness theory claims that social interactions and responses are based on the image people have of themselves, and their desire for approval. What might be considered appropriate and polite behaviour in one culture might be impolite in another. There are acts that can threaten an addressee's positive face, which include acts in which a speaker demonstrates that their disapproval or dislike. These acts can be imposed on the speaker. For example, when some says they did not like the addressee or their behaviour or belongings making them feel unappreciated and not understood. On the other hand, there are acts that threaten an addressee's negative face, in which the

addressee is pressured to accept or to reject a future act of the speaker, such as offers or promises. A compliment can also be a threatening act when the addressee has a reason to believe that their goods (e.g. house, children) are being desired by the speaker. Politeness can be negative or positive:

negative face reflects an individual's need for freedom of action; **positive face** reflects an individual's need for his or her wishes and desires to be appreciated in a social context. The difference between them is that negative politeness is specific and focused on minimising face-threatening acts. Positive politeness 'anoints' the hearer's positive face, making them feel appreciated and understood. Face threatening acts threaten the hearer's face because they are the opposite of what they desire or want to hear, giving rise to expressions such as 'to save face' or 'to suffer a loss of face'.

To save the face of others, a speaker chooses an act that does not lead to the loss of his own face and the other's negative face. It is possible that speakers may find themselves in unpredictable interactions in which they have to employ a repertoire of face-saving tactics for each interaction if they want to handle themselves and others well in all situations (Brown and Levinson 1987, p.70). For instance, giving compliments affects speakers' negative face and apologies damage speakers' positive face. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest three aspects that can be used to mark the strength of the FTA: P (power), D (social distance) and R (the degree of imposition).

If speakers intend to engage in FTA, they can do it with *off record* strategies that utilising indirect linguistic realisation or on *record* strategies that can be performed without redress or with redress by employing positive and negative politeness.

The following figure illustrates the theory:

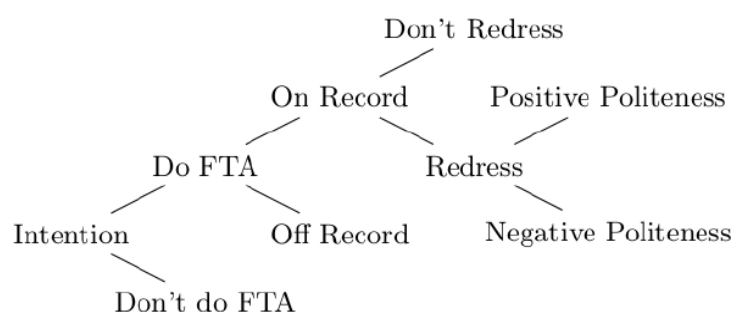


FIGURE 1: (BROWN AND LEVINSON LEVINSON'S THEORY OF POLITENESS 1987, P. 69)

Of particular relevance to the current study is Brown and Levinson's formulation for the calculation of the riskiness of a particular FTA (1987, p. 76)

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

Here, W_x is the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTA x ; $D(S, H)$ is the value that measures the social distance between S and H ; $P(H, S)$ is a measure of the power that H has over S , and R_x is a value that measures the degree to which the FTA x is rated an imposition in that culture.

There are certain aspects of face wants (what the hearers desire or want to hear) which vary from one culture to another. Indeed, Culpeper (2011, p.2) states that culture is highly influential in all aspects of politeness and polite behaviours. For example, Western culture allegedly prefers negative politeness (Brown and Levinson. 1987, p.143). A number of studies which investigate the instantiation of speech acts across cultures (starting with Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) have varied social distance, power and imposition factors to test which factors affect the linguistic formulae employed by speakers in different cultures and contexts. This theory was drawn upon particularly to describe the strategies used by the participants in the current study but it was not enough to explain non-western reasons behind the uses. For example, promises are categorised as positive politeness strategies. However, in this study, promises were not always positive because

some respondents felt forced to make that promise (because of the compliment that has been made to them). In other words, they felt imposed upon rather than feeling imposition. This theory alone does not answer the research questions of the study, but it is used as a solid base to distinguish the most used strategies.

2.4.2 Criticism of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory

Although Brown and Levinson's theory has been widely adopted, it has also been criticised by some researchers on various grounds. One is that the list of politeness strategies mainly covers a limited type of interaction in which the speakers have communication goals or presuppositions. For example, it proved to be insufficient to explain email communications in a study conducted by Townley and Jones (2016). Another ground for criticism is that the theory does not take into account that single utterances are part of a sequence of utterances, focusing instead on goal-oriented interactions (cf. Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Scollon and Scollon, 1981). In addition, as Culpeper (2011, p.14) points out, politeness theory does not discuss nonverbal expressions (e.g. smile), and also (2011, p.18) that context is inadequately handled in classic approaches such as politeness theory. The theory strongly focuses on the individual, which, although appropriate to the West, is not entirely appropriate to the group orientation of Eastern cultures, specifically those of China and Japan (Hu, 1944; Yu, 2003; Gu 1990, Mao 1994, Ide 1989, Matsumoto 1988, Koutlaki 2002).

Despite such criticisms, the Brown and Levinson model is still widely used in research into the field. Skovholt, Gronning and Kankaanranta (2014) and Kadar and Haugh (2014) have described Brown and Levinson's approach as essential for politeness theory. Kadar and Haugh reinforce the idea that politeness theory is the universal underlying framework of pragmatics, but other theories and principles have emerged to successfully describe non-western social interactions and intercultural communication. A scholar who has spent considerable time investigating politeness in British

English and Mandarin Chinese, Spencer-Oatey (2008 p.16), has suggested that ‘people typically hold value-laden beliefs about the principles that should underpin interaction’ and the use of certain strategies in social interactions is not ‘arbitrary’. Culpeper argues that the concept of face is not enough to capture politeness because people have different views and social beliefs, and that politeness is always subject to overall continual judgment (2011, p.32).

Before looking more closely at intercultural aspects of compliments, following Spencer-Oatey’s model, it is important to introduce another related theory, Leech’s politeness principle.

2.4.3 Leech’s politeness principle

Grice (1975) proposed that the fundamental principle of meaningful conversational interaction is the Cooperative Principle (CP). The principle suggests that humans follow a set of mutually agreed guides for ‘maximally efficient communication’ (Brown and Levinson 1987, p.95). The maxims of conversations according to Grice are quality of speech, quantity of speech, relevance of speech and manner of speech.

Grice’s account suggests that when all these maxims are followed the conversation can be expected to be successful. However, this approach is considered rather dated and the four maxims have been criticised for being unclear, overlapping or of different statuses (Leech, 1983).

Following Grice’s CP, Leech’s (1983, 2014) principle of politeness consisted of the following six maxims representing the goals of speakers in achieving a mutual understanding:

- Tact Maxim: minimises cost to other, maximises benefit to other.
- Generosity Maxim: minimises benefit to self, maximises cost to self.
- Approbation Maxim: minimises dispraise of other, maximises praise of other.

- Modesty Maxim: minimises praise of self, maximises dispraise of self.
- Agreement Maxim: minimises disagreement between self and other, maximises agreement between self and other.
- Address Maxim: addressing the interlocutor with an appropriate term of address.

Leech argued that these maxims are universal, but that the expression of them varies across cultures; he also suggested that these maxims could be weighted differently. For example, negative politeness is weighted more than positive politeness in some cultures. According to Leech (1983), the Tact maxim is the ‘most important kind of politeness in English-speaking society’ (p.107). Regarding compliment studies in Saudi contexts, Alamro (2013) found that the most significant politeness principle is agreement along with the implementation of the modesty and generosity principles, which all play an important role in Islamic as well as Saudi-specific social and cultural values. For example, the use of implicit acceptance indicated a preference to find a balance between the agreement and modesty principles in the Najdi community. Implicit acceptance reflects cultural and religious precepts which encourage acts of modesty.

One of the criticisms of the principle of politeness is that there are too many maxims. Its critics argued that normal conversations do not follow all these rules. It was also considered confusing as some maxims overlap (Thomas, 2014). The second major criticism argued that the principle was biased towards Western values (Ide 1989; Matsumoto 1988; Koutlaki 2002). In response to this criticism, Leech (2014) reworked his previous politeness model and developed a model of politeness proposed as a Grand Politeness Strategy (GPS) that is considered to work universally. The construct of Leech’s GPS is proposed. ‘in order to be polite, S expresses or implies meanings which place a high value on what pertains to O (other speakers) or place a low value on what pertains to S (S = self, speaker)’. What Leech’s (1983, 2014) principle added to the Brown and

Levinson (1987) theory is a detailed explanation of what is appropriate, and what is not, in politeness theory. While Brown and Levinson discussed the acts that threaten or save face, Leech explained which ones are considered polite and which ones are not, given that some situations are creative (Leech, 2007, p.203). For example, greetings are expected behaviour in some contexts and do not necessarily reflect politeness rather than a normal politic behaviour. However, requesting behaviour can be formulaic and often involves negative politeness, minimising the threat to the addressee's negative face, so it can represent the difference between what is considered politic behaviour which is a form of politeness and what is a more elaborate form of politeness.

According to Leech, politeness is more about maintaining hegemony and avoiding disagreement than about agreement (2005, p.133). Thus, Leech (2005) argues that negative politeness is more problematic than positive politeness. In the case of compliments, the maxims involved are the approbation maxim, which contributes to other's feelings, and the modesty maxim, which contributes to self's feelings. Some principles overlap. For example, generosity in offers or invitations benefits others but with no cost to self and modesty is understood differently in different societies (2005, p.140). One of the criticisms of his reformulated theory remains that the 'maxims are overlapping and there is no clear distinction between the workability of one or another maxim in a given context' (Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali 2016, p.1541). Thus, some cases need to be explained by other theories or concepts to explore the reasons behind them.

Leech's politeness principles in the current study are used to shed light on what principles weigh more than others in Saudi and British societies. The principles alone do not say much about the reasons behind using certain strategies or how the immersion and non-immersion environments experiences differed, but they helped in conceptualising politeness in the two societies. For example, some strategies, in Saudi culture, are used interchangeably and rely on two principles as in

the case of 'be humble but remain dignified'. From the discussion above, it is indeed important to use politeness strategies to perform a compliment and compliments are not always forms of politeness strategies on their own. Compliments can be understood negatively, as in the case of face-threats, without taking into consideration other concepts such as face and face-work. Therefore, in order to perform it successfully in a culture like Saudi Arabia, it requires some intentional or unintentional face-work. For instance, a person who uses protective words in Saudi Arabia before complimenting is applying some face-work: a person who tries to show modesty when receiving a compliment because that is expected socially has also applied face-work. Face is the focus of the face-work that influences the politeness strategies and shapes the complimenting behaviour of a person. Thus, compliments can be seen as a form of politeness to maintain harmony when used in accordance with cultural and social norms.

A new wave of politeness research has moved in the direction incorporating other aspects. Non maxim-based research pioneers have signalled new ways of looking into social interactions. Spencer-Oatey explains that it is important to notice that those models are not in conflict but rather, they add to each other and share common ground (2008, p.86). Two models that are particularly relevant to the current study are discussed in the next sections: The intercultural communication model by Scollon and Scollon (2001) and the rapport-management model (Spencer-Oatey, 2008)

2.5 Intercultural communication

Scollon and Scollon (2001) argue that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is appropriate in discussing self wants but did not fully address others' needs. They also argued that the social setting is crucial when describing communication. On this basis, their intercultural communication model takes into account self and others' wants together (2001, p.44) and has been found to enrich the discussion of politeness and makes sense of communication among groups from different backgrounds (Feng, 2014). Scollon and Scollon (2001, p.3) claim that culture can hold us together

or drive us apart and propose that in order to consider intercultural communication, the levels of face systems in every act of communication must be taken into account. These face systems consider the relationships of the interlocutors and can be influenced by different factors, which are discussed below.

Scollon and Scollon (2001) believe that the type of social relationship can affect the way the politeness system works. The use of positive politeness strategies often occurs in relationships based on solidarity or hierarchy while negative politeness occurs in relationships based on deference. The solidarity relationship is symmetrical and requires a high level of involvement and positive politeness strategies because it occurs between people with no power over each other or social distance, e.g. 'close friends' (2001, p.54). The deference relationship is also symmetrical and requires the speakers to use negative 'independence' politeness strategies, out of respect or for personal reasons. Some of these strategies are used to minimise threat, for example, apologising, using family names and titles or using own language and dialect. There is no power difference in this relationship but there is a social distance, e.g. among colleagues or fellow students (2001, p.54). The hierarchy relationship is asymmetrical, and the politeness strategies are used differently between interlocutors (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p.54). For example, those in superior positions tend to use involvement strategies while the ones who are in a lower position tend to use independence strategies (p.55).

A symmetrical relationship can be affected by social distance and power while the asymmetrical relationship is affected by power and weight of imposition. Scollon and Scollon (2001) explain that face systems are the expectations of using certain strategies of positive or negative politeness based on power and social distance variables. Those expectations are not fixed and can be influenced by gender, topic, and weight of imposition. Power distance and imposition are factors that determine

what strategies to use. (p.59). The participants can be aware of the existence of a difference in power or the existence of no difference in power. On the other hand, when the imposition of a situation increases, the use of independence strategies increases. Consequently, when the imposition decreases, the use of involvement strategies increases.

The use of positive strategies is categorised as an involvement politeness while the use of negative strategies is categorised as independence politeness. Any form of communication is involvement, but there are different types of involvement (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p.51). Therefore, politeness strategies play an important role in intercultural communication because the study of politeness strategies can reveal not only face and politeness tactics, but also the power and social relationships between the interlocutors.

However, Scollon and Scollon also state:

In any particular case, of course, because of individual differences, differences in the imposition being advanced, or differences in the context, any strategy might be used by a speaker (1983, p.169).

For this reason, it should be understood that the types of politeness strategies in each system are only predictions and might or might not be confirmed throughout conversational exchanges (Feng, 2014). Expanding on this point, Culpeper argues, based on bulge theory, that while the relationships among strangers and intimates are often similar in different cultures, acquaintances, coworkers and friends who differ based on social relationships (distance) is less certain and requires more negotiation' (2011, p.13). Scollon and Scollon (2001) discuss the concept of stereotyping as a way of thinking that does not acknowledge internal differences within a group (p.272). They argue that looking for differences always reinforces stereotyping and exaggerates differences (p.273).

It also limits our understanding of human behaviour and blinds us from the full picture because no individual person can represent all the characteristics of their group, authenticity or community. In the case of the current study, choosing a different strategy to pay a compliment or respond to a compliment does not always refer to culture, but can also refer to one's beliefs with regard to group harmony (p.277). For example, there are two images in Chinese culture: self-image and your image in the eyes of others. Politeness in Chinese culture means showing respect to traditions which reflects on how a person is viewed by others. For example, a person who respects family ties and traditions is well-regarded within one's family circle as loyal. This is an important concept and relevant to the current study as it explored the weights of social relationship and expected strategies in different social relationships. Scollon and Scollon (2001) do not explore the weight of imposition in social relationships in any depth which is important in this study. This requires another framework with which to explore interpersonal relationships: Spencer-Oatey's rapport-management model, which is discussed next.

2.6 Spencer-Oatey's rapport-management model

Spencer-Oatey's model is a framework that enables linguists to analyse how language is used to manage relationships. The model addresses the absence in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory of any specific positive or negative behaviours. Spencer-Oatey (2008, p.13) emphasises:

I maintain that Brown and Levinson's (1987) conceptualisation of positive face has been underspecified, and that the concerns they identify as negative face issues are not necessarily face concerns at all.

She proposed a modified model which deals with people's interactions, 'The management of harmony–disharmony among people'.

This model entails three main interconnected components to deal with self and others:

- i. The management of face which deals with face sensitivities and attributes (pp.13-14)
- ii. The management of sociality rights and obligations which deals with social expectations and norms,

e.g. social expectations as in the concept of kinship in non-Western communities

- iii. The management of interactional goals which deals with people's goals (2008, p.14) e.g. having a goal of giving a compliment.

These three types of management make up the basis for explaining and describing social rapport.

Spencer-Oatey explains that face sensitivities entail three types of identities: individual, social and relational. For sociality rights and obligations, there are two types of principles (2008, p.16): equity rights and association rights. Equity rights mean 'we have a fundamental belief that we are entitled to personal consideration from others, too there are treated fairly: that we are not unduly imposed upon, that we are not unfairly ordered about and that we are not taken advantage of or exploited' (p. 16). Equity rights show how a person values their independence and wants to be freed from imposition. Association rights 'are the belief that we are entitled to social involvement with others, in keeping with the type of relationship that we have with them' (p.16). In the case of compliments, they are regarded as face-threatening acts and face enhancing acts at the same time and usually have a positive effect on interpersonal relationships (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p.20).

Politeness exists as a result of interactions between people and culture (Reiter, 2000, p.1-2). Thus, some politeness strategies are not arbitrary, and they can express strongly held values (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p.16). Spencer-Oatey (2008) suggests that there are acts that threaten the positive

harmony among people. Those threats can disrupt any of the bases of rapport. face sensitivities, sociality rights, or interaction goals.

According to Culpeper (2011,p.25), Spencer-Oatey's model is detailed and applicable to language data because it divides face concepts into three levels (discussed above) as the concept of face is not enough to capture politeness because people have different views and social beliefs (2011,p.32). To explain the workings of politeness beyond being simply an evaluative and individualistic moment, House and Kadar (2020) support the use of ritual frames such as a rapport-management model to explain interpersonal behaviour as the key frame, coupled with speech acts.

The act of complimenting is considered to be both a face-threatening act and a face-enhancing act. From a rapport-management view, a compliment can threaten a person's social right if the receiver of the compliment feels annoyed at the intimacy imposed upon him/her. Spencer-Oatey (2008) discusses factors that explain the use of a certain strategy. Those factors can be social or psychological. There are four types of rapport orientations that can explain people's use of strategies: enhancing, maintaining, neglecting or challenging orientations. The choice of these orientations depends on people's personal needs and their considerations of others, and sometimes the existence of mutual support (p.32). Contextual variables can be various in type and benefits. The important variable that is related to this study is 'participants and their relations' which contains power and social distance and is seen as an essential part of the discussion of intercultural communication. Power, in sociolinguistic research, refers to unequal role relations. (p.34).

Raven (1993) outlined the bases of power and the five types of power that influence interpersonal relationship as follows:

- i. Reward power when someone has power over positive outcomes.
- ii. Coercive power when someone has power over negative outcomes.
- iii. Expert power when someone has power of knowledge that other people want.
- iv. Legitimate power when someone has the right because of his role or status to expect certain things.
- v. Referent power when someone is admired, and other people want to mimic them.

Power types are interchangeable and can co-occur. Spencer-Oatey also classified the meaning of social distance into 6 components (2008, p.36): social familiarity or difference, frequency of contact, the length of acquaintance, how well people know each other, sense of like mindedness, and positive and negative affect. These components can describe the degree of closeness and distance in social relationships with a good level of granularity.

As politeness theory has often been criticised for being unable to capture non-western politeness behaviour, Leech's politeness principles were drawn upon to explain possible motives behind using particular politeness strategies in context. The additional use of Scollon and Scollon's (2011) intercultural communication model helped to shed light on the ways that different cultures adapt their systems of polite behaviour when interacting with one another. Finally, Spencer-Oatey's rapport-management framework is more holistic than previous politeness models and aims to capture aspects of social norms found in both western and non-western communities. The approach is useful in the current study because it provides a solid explanation for the various reasons behind the use of certain strategies rather than labelling those strategies as positive or negative.

The importance of face to the study of interlanguage pragmatics is highlighted by Dippold (2009) where she also encourages the use of different accounts beyond face and politeness:

...the field of interlanguage pragmatics is ready for further changes, starting with a renewed theoretical perspective on face, and leading to new objects of research. If face and facework were seen as efforts for presentation self-presentation beyond politeness, interlanguage pragmatics could significantly enlarge its research agenda (P.26)

In the next section, the implications of politeness theory, theories of intercultural communication and rapport-management will be linked to theories of language acquisition, with particular reference to pragmatics'

2.7 Interlanguage pragmatics and types of pragmatic transfer

2.7.1 Interlanguage pragmatics

Kasper (1992, p.203) views interlanguage pragmatics as a branch of second language research which studies how non-native speakers (NNS) understand and effect linguistic action in a target language and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge. The definition of interlanguage pragmatics is found in different studies and varies according to the nature of the study. The ability of the learners is a crucial factor.

While Selinker (1972) positioned interlanguage within the field of second language acquisition, Kasper (1992, p.207) viewed interlanguage pragmatics as a constantly changing field that helps in developing our knowledge of pragmatics. Other researchers report that learners' pragmatic competence depends on variables such as proficiency (Félix-Brasdefer, 2007) and length of stay in the speech community of the target language (Kecskes, 2010). Several studies have revealed that study abroad experiences provide a positive opportunity for learning and found changes towards more native-like behaviour and the use of similar strategies to those used by native speakers

(Barron, 2003; Schauer, 2010; Shively, 2011). For example, Alcón-Soler (2015) reported that learners of Spanish, after spending four months in a study abroad programme, showed a change to some of their language's skills. e.g. request forms. (p.163).

Ren (2014, p.576) investigated the effect of study abroad on refusal behaviour in three stages by analysing the cognitive processes of advanced L2 learners. It was reported that there was an overall increase in their cognitive awareness and a decrease in pragmatic difficulties. The author posits that living in the L2 culture appears to provide the most direct access possible to large amounts of input and interaction with native speakers. The study also indicated an increase in pragmatic knowledge acquired by informal rather than classroom, learning (p.592). Other studies have come to a similar conclusion that communicating with native speakers while studying abroad increases the awareness of learners about pragmatic differences (Alcon-Sole 2015, Glaser, 2017). Henery (2015) emphasised the importance to study abroad experience of whether there is pre-instruction or not. Some students will use their acquired knowledge in everyday language to enhance their immersion experience and language skills development, and some will use their everyday experience to observe and develop their pragmatic awareness as well as their language skills development. Battaler (2010) explained, based on the results of her study of learners of Spanish in a study abroad program, that some pragmatic features will not be acquired even after immersion unless they are taught (p.173). Findings from Alcon-Sole's (2015) study support this, in that some pragmatic features, namely, requests and refusals, are harder to acquire abroad; he argues that teaching pragmatics is beneficial even if the students are unable to use the knowledge.

A study of meta-pragmatics, defined as students' ability to reflect and comment explicitly on pragmatic behaviour perceptions in native language vs. *lingua franca* settings, found that participants in both settings developed their meta-pragmatic perceptions at a pragma-linguistic level

and at socio-pragmatic level (Glaser, 2017). Both socio-pragmatics (the sociology of pragmatics) and pragma-linguistics (the linguistic aspects of pragmatics) can shed light on how people manage rapport. Socio-pragmatic failure is defined as a failure to observe the 'social conditions placed on language in use' (Thomas, 1983, p. 99). Leech (1983)'s social principles deal with socio-pragmatic factors (discussed above).

Pragma-linguistic failure occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by the speaker onto a given utterance is systematically different from that which is most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when conversational strategies are inappropriately transferred from the speaker's mother tongue to the target language (Thomas, 1983, p. 99). Pragma-linguistic failure results from a mismatch between the strategy used and the intended meaning due to a pragmatic transfer.

Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993, p. 10) and Kasper (2005) view negative transfer as a threat to successful communicative competence. According to Kasper (1992, p. 194), negative transfer occurs when the pragmatic features in a learners' interlanguage from L1 are different from L2. This makes the conversation inappropriate because the meaning of utterances is not delivered as intended by the speakers. In this case, the transfer hinders achieving pragmatic competence in the target language by L2 learners and is therefore considered negative. Understanding the process of negative transfer is important because, whereas positive transfer usually yields successful communication, negative transfer causes miscommunication.

A number of studies have discussed the importance of linguistic proficiency to facilitate the acquisition of pragmatic competence for L2 learners and limit the transfer of their native norms into the target language. AlEryani (2007) proposes that a high linguistic proficiency contributes to

positive transfer of target language pragmatics. Conversely, conditions like weight of imposition and low levels of proficiency can contribute to negative transfer (Kasper, 1992,p.205).Yamagashira (2001) proposes that the reason why negative transfer is associated with low proficiency is that language learners with low proficiency use their L1 strategies more. Similarly, Taguchi (2011) suggests that low proficiency might be associated with negative transfer because learners do not know the L2 norms and therefore rely on their own rules. This study looked at the effect of study-abroad experience on speech act production, reported that results showed that with more increased proficiency, learners decreased the use of direct strategies and became more native-like; although they had difficulty in applying micro-level strategies (e.g. internal modifiers) even at advanced levels. However, a study of transfer by Chen (2009) reported no significant differences in the amount of transfer between learners of different proficiency levels.

There are conditions in which the transfer can occur, and proficiency is not always the main issue. Takahashi (1996) argued that other types of knowledge outweighed proficiency. Taguchi (2011) added that increasing proficiency and engaging in a study-abroad experience both resulted in a tendency for students to use more mitigated than unmitigated expressions, although the use of some syntactic forms remained under-developed. Alcon-Sole (2015), also researching a study abroad experience, found no significant change; some aspects remained unaffected by the study abroad experience but there were some aspects of the learners' request production that did change. In her study, while the study abroad experience improved some lexical areas and fluency of students, it did not necessarily improve syntax or grammar.

Length of stay in the target community proved to be effective in reducing the occurrence of negative transfer in some respects. Unfamiliarity with culture might be the cause of the transfer and not always proficiency. In addition, transferability depends on universal and specific knowledge of

a language and learning the difference can affect the occurrence of transfer. Thomas emphasised that pragmatic language use is filtered through beliefs about the language and the world (1993, p. 99). For example, Taguchi (2011) explained that the transfer can be in terms of performance not only strategies; for example, the preference to deflect or reject a compliment is based on social norms.

To identify the nature of transfer, pragmatics researchers have investigated the universality of transfer and the similarities and differences among languages. For example, Cohen-Olshtain (1981) reports that Hebrew learners of English used fewer apology strategies compared to English speakers, as this is the norm in Hebrew-speaking culture. The study showed the different ranges of semantic formulae each group used, which reflect their cultural background. In line with that, Blum-Kulka (1982) compared the directness of 32 adult native speakers of Hebrew, 44 adult native speakers of English learners of Hebrew, and 10 adult native speakers of English. The findings revealed that the English Hebrew learners acquired direct and indirect strategies but used the strategies differently from the native speakers of Hebrew. The difference lies in their ways of choosing less direct forms of directives than those chosen by native speakers of Hebrew, which is evidence of socio-pragmatic transfer. Similarly, Takahashi and Beebe (1993) found evidence of socio- pragmatic transfer in a study they conducted with Japanese learners of English, Japanese native speakers and American English native speakers. Americans used positive opinions very frequently in correcting others' statements and did so more than Japanese learners of English and Japanese native speakers. In Japan, people rarely express positive opinions, and therefore the Japanese native speakers did not do so and nor did the Japanese learners of English, tending to employ their L1 norms in L2.

Several studies suggest that teaching pragmatics can help in shaping culturally specific language choices which are influenced by explicit learning about the differences (Robinson, 1992; Kasper 1992). Thomas (1983) argued that the students might not have the tools to use pragmatic norms correctly and might therefore be regarded as rude by native speakers. She therefore suggests that teachers show students the types of decision-making in certain situations by pointing out native speaker differences, to avoid impoliteness and miscommunication (p.99).

Pragmatic failure happens when students of a foreign language use their L1 background to judge a situation. Thomas (1983, p.97) believes that ‘pragmatic failure reflects badly on a person ‘Failure can be either socio-pragmatic or pragma-linguistic; the former is more serious as it can cause miscommunication. For example, how students behave towards their foreign language teacher is a part of their cross culturally different assessment of relative power and social distance.

In Saudi Arabia and some non-Western countries, there is a social assumption in which teachers are seen as higher status (Thomas 1982, p.105). This can be confusing for native language teachers in non-Western environments and make it difficult for them to understand students’ behaviours and some language use in student-teacher interactions. This difference is mostly based on different pragmatics principles, and not necessarily different moral principles. For example, Thomas (1983, p.108) observes that in certain cultures the generosity principle, introduced by Leech (1983), is more valued than the agreement principle, and that these principles are not moral values but should be regarded as communicative values. Therefore, Thomas emphasised that socio-pragmatics failure is based on social decisions and is sensitive to correction and judgement.

Pragma-linguistic failure is concerned with using L1 rules to communicate in L2. This includes the concept of over-generalisation, for example, the over-generalisation of the use of imperative forms when making requests. Sometimes, teaching materials and classroom discourse may increase

pragmatic failure. According to Thomas (1983, p.96), foreign language students tend to use hypercorrect language because they are forced to learn proper English that is no longer in use by native speakers. However, this type of failure is less problematic because it does not reflect badly on speakers as opposed to socio-pragmatic failure which would involve referring to taboo topics such as sexuality or religion (Thomas 1983,p.105) ; in other words, it is about utterance meaning not speaking meaning (words vs. social meaning). Taguchi (2011) also reported that some of the pragma-linguistic failure was due to the overuse of certain expressions and the underuse of certain other expressions. Taguchi (2011) concluded that negative transfer is more likely due to a lack of cultural knowledge than a lack of language proficiency. Negative transfer is a negative correlation between L1 and L2 in which learners of L2 apply L1 norms and forms when interacting in L2.

While many studies have focused on the production of the language rather than the process of learning it, the more recent ILP has been proposed within SLA studies as shedding light on the learning process and learners' abilities to communicate. The importance of interlanguage pragmatics lies in its ability to show how non-native speakers understand and perform linguistic actions in a target language. Researchers of second language acquisition (SLA) emphasise the significance of interlanguage pragmatics in showing how the target language is being acquired (Mey, 1995; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). Many studies discuss the role of different factors in the progress of L2 knowledge and most of these factors can be categorised as sociolinguistic and/or psycholinguistic. For example, factors such as age, gender and social norms can contribute to the learning process of a target language but are also independent of L1 or the target language interference. The current study aims to further knowledge in these areas by looking at similar factors to explain how two groups of English learners perform compliments in English and compare them to the way they are performed by native speakers of English.

One of the implications of the current study is that there is a need for further research into the different ways in which the acquisition of appropriate compliment and compliment response behaviour in English can be enhanced. Previous studies have looked at the effects of study abroad on the acquisition of speech act behaviour. To the researcher's knowledge, none has investigated the 'noticing hypothesis' in relation to the socio-pragmatic dimension of speech acts, a topic which is addressed in the following, and penultimate section of this chapter.

2.8 The noticing hypothesis

Second language theories support the notion of unconscious learning, but concur that in adulthood, conscious learning seems to be more effective. Within the area of teaching pragmatics and individual differences with regard to rapport-management, classroom input is very important but frequency and presence of the input in real communication seems to be equally important. Schmidt (2012) formed his hypothesis that noticing even if not full understanding of the meaning, is required for learning forms, and so paying attention helps develop the language. Although different studies have questioned the validity of the hypothesis, a good number report that it worked for some areas of learning. One of these areas was awareness of using certain grammatical forms, but not learning the form themselves, and this was confirmed by Schmidt himself:

Adults do seem to have lost the still mysterious ability of children to acquire the grammatical forms of language while apparently not paying attention to them (Schmidt 1983, p. 172)

Schmidt argued that the noticing hypothesis means that adults benefit from implicit and explicit learning. What is essential for grammar may not be so for vocabulary because learners can acquire new vocabulary implicitly, via pleasure reading for example, so individual differences affect noticing ability. Both implicit and explicit learning can be successful but noticing and conscious

attention have helped the process of learning, especially for adults. Schmidt (2012), therefore, distinguished three terms of consciousness: as intention, as attention, and as awareness. In SLA, attention and awareness are linked and can be described as incidental learning, whereas intention is a goal-oriented type of learning. In the same vein, this reconfirmed Gardner and Lambert's (1972)'s theories of motivation, which is a highly regarded theory in SLA studies.

Schmidt (2012) further explained that using the term 'noticing' technically means limiting it to the conscious registration of language instances, and 'understanding' enables one to have a higher level of awareness, which includes making subtle generalisations across instances. Empirical studies have supported this hypothesis and the claim that 'noticing is necessary for SLA, and [...] understanding is facilitative but not required' (Schmidt 2012, p.725).

Glaser's study of two groups of students who enrolled in a study abroad trip to learn English pointed out the importance of noticing in different language learning settings. The findings of the study showed that teaching practice was useful in both a native setting and in a lingua franca setting. The students did not have the chance to use what they had learned inside the classroom, but reported that they were able to use what they learnt to observe intercultural norms (2017, p.120)

Ren's (2014) study of students who spent time abroad and how their immersion contact affected their refusal behavior, also lends support to the noticing hypothesis. Participants reported that through communicating with native speakers while studying abroad, they began to notice the differences between the native speakers' communicative style and their own, 'which contributed to the development of their socio-pragmatic competence and the expansion of their pragma-linguistic repertoire' (Ren 2014, p.590). The findings highlighted the key role of noticing the input for L2 learners' pragmatic development, thus providing empirical support for the noticing hypothesis. In other words, noticing pragmatic input, apart from grammatical forms, is crucial to acquiring L2 pragmatic knowledge.

Evidence continues to accumulate as in a recent study conducted into the process of learning the Qur'an by Muslim non-native Arabic speakers (Damanhour, 2018) found that these students could recite the Qur'an without the need to be able to speak or understand Arabic initially; students were motivated to learn Arabic for religious and instrumental purposes. Furthermore, the Qur'an's language structure has rhyme and rhythm and so it is pleasing to recite it aloud.

Teachers are encouraged to focus on Arabic phonemes to teach students how to recite it and not to require students to activate their reflective thinking. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to highlight that some of the sounds are not identical to what they are familiar with in their own language (such students most commonly come from East Asian countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh).

Conversely, when teaching Arabic, teachers can refer to verses from the Qur'an to facilitate the process (Damanhour 2018, p24). The instructor can bring to the students' attention examples from the Qur'an to remind them of language forms and pronunciations to help them distinguish certain sounds. This approach

draws on a similar rationale of integrating culture into the teaching of English by using authentic materials such as films, music and literature. Those authentic materials can bring real examples to remind learners of certain language forms, vocabulary items and perhaps make the language more memorable. Memorising and rehearsing depends on the learners' personal goals and individual differences. In Damanhour (2018)'s study, some students reported that their goal was to improve their understanding of the content of the Qur'an, and some students wanted to go further and understand the meanings of the Qur'an. It is known that Allah will accept their prayers whether they understand the meanings behind the words or not, but they showed dedication and constant rehearsal.

Similarly, Skehan (2002) has suggested that in order to convert input to comprehensible output to develop skills, there are four processing stages: noticing, patterning, controlling and lexicalising. Those stages are found to be effective and in line with findings from more recent SLA studies (Galser, 2017; Ren, 2014; Damunhour, 2018). It is safe to say that noticing can be applicable to learning languages in general, and possibly to socio-pragmatic learning, though to my knowledge, this has not yet been put to the test.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter started by introducing the field of study, important concepts (interlanguage pragmatics, speech Act theory, concept of face), as well as influential theories in the field of pragmatics and politeness. The chapter moved on to focus closely on the principles and frameworks that have been developed in order to conceptualise politeness. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory was discussed, along with their social distance, power and imposition variables, and the notion of the FTA. Spencer-Oatey's rapport-management model (association and equity rights) and Leech's Modesty maxims were outlined. Reference was made to individual differences and factors that affect L2 learning and the evidence that supports the noticing hypothesis. The next chapter is a literature review of previous studies on compliments and compliment responses in L1 and L2 contexts.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with an overview of the speech act of compliments. It then goes on to survey the scholarly literature concerning the nature of compliments, functions of compliments and the uses of compliments. The chapter describes the culture of Saudi Arabia, differences between Saudi Arabia and United Kingdom and considers the concept of stereotyping. Then it presents the literature on compliment behaviour in Western and Eastern communities before moving to focus on Saudi studies and their limitations. Finally, it discusses the teaching of pragmatics and English in Saudi Arabia in light of the results of previous studies.

3.2 Compliment speech act and politeness

3.2.1 The nature of a compliment

Complimenting is a type of speech act that expresses a positive evaluation of objects or traits that belong to another. Those evaluations are in general ostensibly positive, but researchers have also pointed out that compliments can also be negative in nature if perceived as face-threatening act.

These evaluations might on occasions be not welcomed by the receiver or misunderstood. In this sense, it is not enough to conceptualise compliments as expressive acts (Searle, 1969), but also as politeness acts, by means of which face can be saved or threatened, as in the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). (See sections 2.3 and 2.4.1)

Holmes (1986, p. 151) defines a compliment as

A speech act which directly or indirectly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the addressee, or somebody related to him or her for something 'good' which is positively valued by the speaker and hearer in the light of a social contract of values between society and individuals which governs the expected compliment behavior of interactants.

This definition can refer to the surface meaning of the act of complimenting as positive, but it does not include the possibility that the act might be perceived as face-threatening or at the very least that it might be perceived differently in different cultures. Nor does it account for implicit compliments. Shahsavari, Alimohammadi and Rasekh(2014) further emphasise the importance of 'who gives the compliment to whom and on what occasion as well as the context and the kind of provided compliment' (p.1746).

In her much reviewed and seminal publications, *Women, Men and Politeness* (1995) Holmes discusses at length the ways in which compliments can be face-threatening acts, such as in sarcastic or ironic put-down compliments. For example, compliments might oblige the recipient to promise to do more, as in the case of compliments on achievements, or may make the recipient feel that it is their duty to fulfil certain tasks, such as working hard to make the family proud, as in Asian and Middle Eastern community concepts of kinship.(Herbert, 1990:Scollon and Scollon, 2011). In Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern cultures, compliments can also be understood as a form of attracting the 'evil eye' or being envious of others (Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols (1996) ; Cuesta, 2013; Alsohaibani 2017). (see 1.1).

While Holmes (among others), discussed above, treats compliments and compliment responses as speech acts, Herbert (1997) puts them into the context of an event. Herbert (1997) describes the compliment event as a two-way turn, involving the complimenter and the complimentee.

The procedure starts when A compliments B and continues when B acknowledges the utterance as a compliment and responds in a culturally appropriate way, to indicate acceptance or rejection of the compliment. The interpretation of a compliment depends importantly on understanding the context in which it is offered.

Searle (1975, pp.2-8) defines making a compliment as an expressive act which satisfies different goals in social interactions. These include using a compliment to start a conversation; to make up

following an argument; to serve work goals; to flirt; and to feel good about oneself by being positive towards others. The goals of interactions are unlimited and depend on the individuals involved and the context. People can give a compliment as a single turn, but if there is an expectation of a response, it becomes a two-way event. If the desired response is not forthcoming, it can cause disharmony between the interlocutors. Successful communication depends on mutual understanding, which includes the understanding of compliment acts. ‘The harmony between compliments and compliment responses helps determine the success of a particular interaction’ (Alrousan, Awal and Salehuddin, 2016, p. 20).

A discussion of the various functions of compliments is presented next.

3.2.2 Functions and uses of compliments

The complex functions of compliments in social life have been the focus of numerous studies within research on speech acts. Holmes states that the various functions of compliments make complimenting a complex sociolinguistic skill (1986, p.488). The complexity requires a deeper level of analysis to fully understand compliment behaviour. For example, as stated above, the apparent function of a compliment is to maintain social harmony and solidarity, but in certain contexts, as in the case of evil eye, it can be a face- threatening act on its own. Furthermore, Holmes (1986) explains that it can be used to soften a preceding face-threatening act, such as a request. Bataller (2010) concurs that requests and compliments are complex speech acts and require learning not only of the lexical terms but of the appropriate use for them. (p.161)

Nonetheless, a number of studies maintain that the primary goal of a compliment is as a means of maintaining or establishing social solidarity between interlocutors (Holmes, 1988, Herbert, 1986; Freed 1997), because it assumed to make ‘the hearer feel good about himself/ herself’ (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989, p.75).

Compliments can be used to initiate a conversation, without becoming its primary topic (Manes and Wolfson, 1981). Alternatively, compliments offer a chance to share information while establishing solidarity (Maltz and Borker, 2012).

Among the variety of communicative functions, a compliment can fulfil, giving a compliment is also considered a politeness strategy in social interactions, as discussed above, compliments and compliment responses are speech acts that have a status and functions of their own. Wolfson (1983, p.88) asserts that compliments

They can strengthen or even replace other speech-act formulas such as apologies, thanks and greetings and can downgrade the force of face-threatening acts such as criticism, approaches, and directives of various types.

In terms of its positive use, according to Holmes (1995, p. 121), compliments can show:

- (1) Solidarity, e.g. women compliment other women on their appearance.
- (2) Positive evaluation, admiration, appreciation or praise. e.g. friends complimenting each other on work achievement.

She also notes two negative uses:

- (3) To express envy of the hearer's possessions, e.g. I wish my house was as nice as yours.
- (4) As a verbal harassment. e.g. unwanted flirtations such as catcalls. Catcalls are sexually explicit remarks directed at someone in a public space (e.g. whistle directed to women usually in passing).

In a study of gender and compliments, Parisi and Wogan (2006) argues that gender affects how compliments can be offered or perceived. Compliments between opposite genders can be a flirtatious act. So, females who wish to avoid flirtation may be wary of compliments given by males. The topic of the compliment was also found to be influenced by gender in Parisi and

Wogan's study: females preferred to compliment males on skills rather than appearance, while males complimented women on appearance rather than skills. The explanation women gave to the researcher was that they did not want to compliment males on appearance as they feared sending the wrong message by being too forward. Thus, compliments can have other functions in everyday conversations aside from their main role of establishing harmony (Manes & Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson, 1989). Compliments can function as a substitute for other speech acts or can strengthen other speech acts. Wolfson (1983, 1989) explains that compliments can replace greetings, gratitude, apologies and congratulations. This is particularly true in Arabic, where using the word '*MashAllah*' to compliment someone is enough to express the meaning of a compliment and a call for God's protection against evil eye. On the use of compliment to replace other speech acts, Saudi Arabic speaker participants in Alsohaibani's (2017) study used compliments on some occasions as a means to congratulate, e.g., on achievements.

3.2.3 Importance of compliments in speech acts studies

Studies by linguists and social theorists have established a range of cultural and socio-cultural factors that influence the speech acts of compliments and compliment responses. As stated earlier, making a compliment is a one-way event, whereas compliment responses are part of a two-way event.

Pomerantz (1978) describes compliment responses as an 'action chain event' (p.109). Therefore, the co-text of the speech act of compliment response is relevant to understanding the two-way event, but not the compliment alone. Despite the differences, the two speech acts are connected. The speech event consists of two parts: a compliment (C) and a compliment response (CR); knowing how to respond to a compliment is as important as knowing how to give it.

Some studies investigate compliments within a single speech community such as in Saudi Arabic

(Alamro, 2013, Alsohaibani 2017) or in Philippine English (Jin-pei,2013). Many studies of complimenting behaviour focus on compliment responses, but a number examine the two speech acts. Some studies compare two communities, as in a study by Tang and Zhang (2009), which investigates compliment responses between Australian English and Mandarin Chinese speakers. Cross-cultural or intercultural studies have compared L1 and L2 speakers, for example: Kuwaiti EFL Learners and British English speakers (Alotaibi, 2016); Spanish and British English speakers (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001); Arab learners of Spanish (Cuesta, 2015); Syrian Arabic and American English speakers (Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols (1996)); Australian English and Persian speakers (Sharifian, 2005); and Chinese and American English speakers (Chen 1993). Some contrastive studies compare varieties of English, such as American English and South African English (Herbert and Straight 1989).The findings of the above-mentioned studies show that offering and responding to compliments are challenging tasks for non-native speakers because compliment strategies reflect social norms and are largely context dependent. For example, learners of Arabic need to understand that offering the object that has been named in a compliment is not a genuine offer but merely ritualistic and should not be accepted(Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols 1996, p.429). Because of such contextual factors, these acts are of great importance in second language acquisition.

Indeed, Alotaibi (2016) argues that the first challenge for non-native speakers is to master the linguistic formats of compliments in a target language. These formats can have add-ons (endorsements) depending on the strategies used. For example, in some situations in Arab societies using an appreciation token strategy is not enough because ‘one needs to give a more wordy response that reflects a good image about him/her on the one hand, and pays sincere tribute to the complimenter on the other’(Alotaibi, 2016, p. 82). Previous studies have pointed out that compliments are formulaic in terms of both meaning and syntactic forms (Manes & Wolfson, 1981;

Holmes, 1986; Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols ,1996). For instance, in a study on American compliments, Wolfson (1983) found that the majority of compliments employ the second person pronoun (You look great) or demonstratives (That's a nice shirt). By contrast, Jin-pei (2013) studied compliments and compliment responses using Yuan's taxonomy (2002), in Filipino English. He found that the majority of the participants give compliments either by using explicit semantic formulae 'e.g. That is a cool cell phone' or by using non-compliments 'e.g. I would not say anything'.

Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols (1996) compared the use of compliments by Syrian Arabic speakers and American English speakers and concluded that compliments in Arabic are formulaic and often come in the form of a proverb. He added that the greater the length of the compliment, the greater the sincerity of it (Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols 1996, p. 430). Apart from mastering the linguistic compliment forms in a target language, the appropriate way to give or respond to compliments in a second language is also a challenging task (Al Falasi, 2007). This is particularly in societies in which compliments are used a lot, such as Arab and American societies (Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols,1996; Wolfson, 1983).A number of studies highlight that even advanced level second language learners come across pragmatically challenging situations when communicating in the target language (Alrousan, Awal and Salehuddin ,2016).

Ishihara (2009) proposes that learners need to be assisted to achieve cultural literacy and linguistic control of the target language by learning about cultural values in one's own country, as well as in the target culture.Scollon and Scollon (2011, p. 280) emphasise that understanding one's own expressions and having some awareness of the other group is better for communication than assuming or claiming full expertise of the target language.

As has been emphasised, compliment speech acts interact with social norms. Social norms arise

from the traditions of a community, building on their cultural background. Knowing the target language's culture or the learner's culture can facilitate communication and avoid the risk of misunderstanding. Misunderstanding can arise from stereotyping people of a certain culture as a homogenous group. The next section discusses culture with regard to language learners.

3.2.4 Culture; L2 learning and stereotyping

In discussing the relevance of focusing on culture in L2 learning, Corbett (2003) argues that it encourages people to review other's cultures and social norms as well as their own. According to Scollon and Scollon (2011, p.3), culture is formed by the practices and values of the group we belong to and affects our thinking, behaving and interactions with others. Culture is found in a set of actions of what one can do rather than an abstract concept inside the mind (Scollon and Scollon, 2011, p.5) People inevitably and subconsciously use their collection of cultural beliefs and values when communicating with others. In viewing culture in the social sciences, Holliday (2010, 2018) proposes two concepts: essentialism and non-essentialism. Essentialism views culture as coincidental with countries or regions, and people who come from those places are presumed to share distinctive patterns of behaviour. In this sense, Saudi people are fundamentally different from British people because of their culture. This is an essentialist way of thinking about culture.

A non-essentialist view does not necessarily deny the essentialist view; rather, it approaches culture from a different viewpoint, which does not look only at the geographical location of a person, but at the background, age, family and educational background: what Holliday refers to as 'small cultures', which constrain individuals to behave in a distinctive way. This view combines people's place of origin with the reasons behind their behaviours and speaking strategies. Holliday (2018), in this view, suggested describing people, with different backgrounds, as 'culturally different'. He suggests, in relation to intercultural communication, that coming from a different culture can be a way to gain acceptance in a new culture. For example, Western people often show interest in the

culture of non-Westerners, such as Asian countries or African countries. This can lead people from those countries to exaggerate their traditional habits to showcase their heritage and feed outsiders' curiosity as a way of gaining acceptance. Exaggerating cultural differences, to gain acceptance, among other behaviours, often reinforces stereotyping, which is discussed in the next section.

3.2.5 Cultural stereotyping

According to Scollon and Scollon (2011), stereotyping is the belief that any two social groups or any two cultures are mutually exclusive, thereby not considering the possibility of individual variation in social life. Scollon and Scollon (2011) describe two types of stereotyping: negative and positive. Negative stereotyping focuses on ideological and artificial differences such as race and considers one group as being superior to another. It does not consider individual differences within a culture and believes that it is differences between two cultural groups that cause miscommunication. Positive stereotyping views different groups as similar and contains two approaches. The first approach is the 'lumping fallacy' which groups all people into one category (e.g., all Africans), and does not take recognise of their individual differences. The second approach is the 'solidarity fallacy' approach which focuses on the similarities between two groups (for example, Saudi and British, ignoring major differences and also does not consider individual differences. Scollon and Scollon (2001, p.169) point out that stereotyping, whether negative or positive, often leads to misconceptions and limits understanding of human behaviour. The present study focusses on language in use and social norms; the next section considers the diverse nature of the Saudi and British languages and cultures.

3.2.6 Diversity

3.2.6.1 Diversity in language: Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom

There are fundamental differences between Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom at both macro-

and micro-levels. The Arabic language has little in common with English, except for the fact, not relevant to speech, that both have an alphabetic writing system that consists of a fixed number of letters: English 26 and Arabic 28. Samarah (2015) states that ‘in Arabic society, social hierarchy was and is still noticeable’ (p.2015). This means that the absence, in languages such as English, of a grammatical system that codes these social rankings is challenging for language learners.

3.2.6.2 Diversity in cultures: Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom

Successful communication in a country like Saudi Arabia, where the Islamic religion is embedded in most aspects of social life and religious life, relies on a balance between these two aspects.

Religion recommends that people show humility in interactions with other people, and society strongly recommends that people show dignity. Samarah (2015) states that ‘society has its requirements on the one hand, and religion gives its recommendation on the other hand’ (p.2015).

This is particularly confusing for non-Muslims and non-Saudis. For example, in the Islamic cultural context, the use of the phrase *inshaAllah* means that the speaker ultimately believes that everything that will happen in the future is in God’s hands. It does not usually mean that the speaker has made an insincere promise (Alsohaibani 2017, p.7) to, for example, be somewhere tomorrow-‘if God wills. It is advised that ‘This human behaviour must not be misinterpreted by other cultures. Arabic behaviour is sometimes misinterpreted as devious by Westerners. Thus, the idea of being polite in Saudi Arabia is being able to compromise between humility and dignity. A common way to do so is to use a politeness expression that contains God’s name and there are various religious expressions for different occasions, for example, *BismiAllah* (‘in the name of God’), *MashAllah* (‘what God has willed’), and *IsmAllah* (‘the name of God’). The last two phrases can function as compliments when someone impresses us with his/her beauty, intelligence, or wealth. As Chendeb (2019) states, these are culture specific ready-made polite forms that are not translatable and have no exact equivalence

in English. Another important aspect of culture in everyday interactions which reflects how religion is inseparable from culture in Saudi Arabia, is the form of greetings. Greetings can be formal, informal, or religious. In English too, greeting can be formal, informal, or religious but religious greetings are not usually employed by the general public. By contrast, in Saudi Arabia, the expected social norm is to employ religious greetings.

In Islamic countries, most Muslims use these prayers and phrases regardless of whether they are religious or not. To further indicate the central importance of religion in the culture of Saudi Arabia, people tend to pin religious phrases and Qur'anic verses on their house walls and entrances, to protect against the 'evil eye' and to protect their home. The most commonly used phrase is '*MashAllah*' and this act is performed to remind those observing and admiring things such as a house to use the phrase' (Alsohaibani 2017, p.266). Another point that illustrates how religion and culture overlap is the preference for using Saudi Arabian airlines by Saudi people. A large number of Saudi people feel comfortable flying on Saudia (as it is known informally), because a Qur'anic verse is engraved on the aeroplane's body that says 'الله يحفظك', which translates in English as 'God bless you'. The common belief is that the verse protects the aeroplanes from misfortune.

Using religious phrases in everyday acts such as greetings, blessings and complimenting is a fundamental part of Saudi culture. Western nurses working in Saudi Arabia reported how important it was for Saudi patients to say prayers before any nursing procedure was performed on them (Almutairi, 2015:19). This does not mean that the nurse has to share the same belief: it means that the act can build trust and give patients a sense of relief. Although this was reported among elderly patients, it will still be appreciated by all as an act of kindness when nurses voluntarily performed those prayers. Samarah (2015) stated that 'Any effort the foreigner makes to use Arabic will be received and appreciated from the Arabs and create much more positive results. (p.2007)

Taylor (2016) has suggested that mock politeness, using irony in a friendly way, is associated with British cultural identity. Leech (1983, p. 144) described 'irony' as 'an apparently friendly way of being offensive'. This type of mock politeness is not practised in the culture of Saudi Arabia at all and considered offensive even among close friends (Danielewicz-Betz and Mamidi 2009, p.12). In Britain, it is common and widely used among friends, colleagues and family members. Such differences affect the way Arabic learners of English think and perform in their second language, because the effort to learn the language is enormous. The same can be said of English learners of Arabic. Although the number of Arabic learners of English is greater than the number of English learners of Arabic, the shift between the two extremely different languages affects all learners.

In this study, some cultural aspects will be discussed and highlighted within the limits of the research focus. While this research is not primarily focusing on cultural differences, it is essential to understand the background of the speakers that underpin their choices. One question that needs to be asked is how Saudi English speakers give compliments and respond to compliments given that, in Saudi Arabia, language learners rarely have much informal contact with Westerners.

The previous discussion indicates that there are fundamental differences between learners in the two language-speaking groups. The language differences between Arabic and English have been the focus of many studies in the area of speech acts, and more specifically, complimenting speech acts in the West, East and Middle East. Some of these studies are surveyed in the next section.

3.3 Studies of compliments

3.3.1 Studies of compliments in English

A number of researchers have described compliments as formulaic speech acts in different languages, owing to the limited range of lexical items and the syntactic patterns used in compliment events (Manes and Wolfson 1981; Wolfson 1981, 1983, Holmes 1988).

Using an ethnographic approach, Manes and Wolfson (1981) collected 686 American English compliments. The researchers and their assistants wrote down the compliments they encountered in their daily lives. The findings suggested that American English compliments are highly formulaic on the syntactic and semantic levels. Three patterns were found that cover 80% of the collected data, and of all the adjectival complements used by participants, two-thirds were: ‘nice’, ‘good’, ‘beautiful’, ‘pretty’ and ‘great’.

The syntactic formulae are as follows:

ADJ: Positive adjectives. ADV = Positive adverb. NP= Noun Phrase.

Pattern	Formula	Illustrative example
(1)	NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ	Your hair looks nice
(2)	I (really) {love/like} NP	I love your hair
(3)	PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP	This is really a great meal
(4)	You V (a) (really) ADJ NP	You did a good job
(5)	You V (NP) (really) ADV	You really handled that situation well
(6)	You have (a) (really) ADJ NP	You have such beautiful hair
(7)	What (a) ADJ NP!	What a lovely baby you have
(8)	ADJ NP!	Nice game!
(9)	Isn't NP ADJ!	Isn't it pretty!

TABLE 1: (MANES & WOLFSON, 1981, PP. 120-121)

The verbs used in combination with these semantic adjectives were also limited in number.

According to Manes and Wolfson (1981), ‘love’ and ‘like’ accounted for 86% of the verbs occurring in their data. Holmes (1986) replicated Manes and Wolfson’s (1981) study by collecting a corpus of 517 compliments in New Zealand English, using an ethnographic approach. She found that the number of syntactic patterns that occurred regularly was limited and compliments in New Zealand English had distinctive features. For example, women tended to use noun phrases in compliments more than men. Almost 70% of Holmes’ New Zealand data confirmed the three most frequent patterns reported earlier by Manes and Wolfson (1981).

Later on, Holmes (1986) developed three main categories of compliment responses, based on three

macro components of compliments: accept, reject, and deflect or evade. She analysed complimenting behaviour based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and argued that compliments can be twofold: positive affective speech acts on the one hand, and on the other, face-threatening acts.

The first layer of analysis initially considers compliments to serve positive politeness functions, but the many layers reveal their face-threatening functions in various contexts. Yuan (2002) developed a framework for compliment production and compliment responses to analyse Kunming Chinese speakers using two methods: DCTs (discourse completion tasks) and natural observation, looking at semantic and syntactic forms. He found that participants mostly used explicit compliment and compliment acceptance strategies. Yuan analysed compliments functionally and created a taxonomy comprising four categories: explicit compliments (unbound semantic formula), implicit compliments (bound semantic formula), no compliment and opt out. Yuan (2002) divided semantic formulae for compliments as follows:

C Strategies		Context	Example
Unbound Semantic Formula	Explicit C	Your friend bought a new cell phone.	What a nice cell phone you have.
	Implicit C		I wish I could have a cell phone like yours.
Bound Semantic Formula	Explanation	Your friend fixed your laptop.	I saw how difficult it was to fix my laptop.
	Information Question		Where did you learn to fix it?
	Future Reference		You have a bright future in fixing laptops.
	Contrast		I think you are more helpful than your brother.
	Advice		You'd better open a laptop store.
	Request		Can you check my cell phone too?
Non-compliment		Your friend listened to your problems.	Sorry to take your time.
Opt-out		Your neighbor is wearing a new shirt.	I would say nothing.

TABLE 2: (YUAN (2002) TAXONOMY OF COMPLIMENT 2002, P.192)

Yuan's taxonomy is relevant to the current study because it combines two speech acts and makes it possible to analyse compliments functionally. Pomerantz (1978) initiated the focus on compliment responses by studying American English speakers. She reported that speakers were often faced with two choices: (a) agreement with the speaker, and (b) evasion of self-praise.

This schema seemed to affect speakers' decision-making and choice of strategies when responding. The analysis of the data showed a tendency toward disagreement and rejection of compliments. Some reported strategies to solve this difficult situation were avoidance, downgrade and shift credits strategies. In a study comparing the compliment responses produced by American and speakers of other varieties of English, Herbert (1986), building on the schema developed by Pomerantz (1978), created a taxonomy of compliment exchanges. The data were collected with the help of undergraduate students who collected more than a thousand compliment exchanges within an American university.

Response Type	Example
A. Agreement	
I. Acceptances	
1. Appreciation Token	Thanks; thank you; [smile]
2. Comment Acceptance	Thanks, it's my favorite too.
3. Praise Upgrade	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?
B. Nonagreement	
I. Scale Down	It's really quite old.
II. Question	Do you really think so?
III. Nonacceptances	
1. Disagreement	I hate it.
2. Qualification	It's all right, but Len's is nicer.
IV. No Acknowledgement	[silence]
C. Other Interpretations	
I. Request	You wanna borrow this one too?

TABLE 3: (HERBERT TAXONOMY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES .1986. P.79)

Herbert (1986) reported that certain data are uniquely American and do not seem to be available in other varieties of English. He compared the data with studies of South African and British English and found that the two groups act in ways that are similar to one another and different from American data. American speakers tended to reject compliments, whereas South African and British speakers were more likely to accept the compliment. Herbert speculated that the reasons for these differences related to social norms and different political and religious beliefs. In Herbert and Straight's (1989) study, offering and accepting compliments had different functions between Americans and South Africans: while South Africans seemed to use compliments to affirm solidarity, Americans seemed to use compliments to negotiate solidarity with non-intimate peers.

3.3.2 Studies of compliments in European languages

In a contrastive study of compliment responses by Spanish and British university students (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001), a DCT instrument was used to study the strategies employed when responding to compliments and their politeness orientations. The study used Herbert's (1989) taxonomy to analyse a corpus of more than a thousand compliment responses. The study found differences and similarities at cross-cultural and cross- gender levels. Spanish males were found to upgrade compliments ironically, a strategy that was less frequent among the Spanish females. In the British data, agreeing with a compliment was found in combination with humour. Spanish speakers asked for repetition or expansion of compliments, whereas British participants tended to question the sincerity of the compliments. In both cultures, participants tended to avoid self-praise about natural talents and intelligence.

Golato (2002) investigated the use of compliment responses among family and friends by German and American participants. The study used a conversation analytic method, which consisted of a corpus of 25 hours of non-elicited videotaped dinner-table conversations and 6 hours of audiotaped telephone conversations between close friends and family members. The findings suggested that German and American speakers accepted compliments but used different strategies. The notable difference was that none of the German speaking participants used appreciation tokens to accept compliments but mostly provided a confirmation such as 'yes'. German speakers also employed acceptance by using upgraders (as in agreement), whereas American accepted by using down graders. Both participants used rejection and other strategies; the main difference was in acceptance strategies, which Golato suggests will be more problematic for language learners of both languages than giving compliments.

Bergqvist (2009) conducted a study of giving and responding to compliments in Swedish. The study used DCTs to investigate Swedish L1 and Swedish L2 English learners' strategies in compliment

speech acts, consisting of a questionnaire in English and Swedish. The Swedish data were then compared with a control group of Scottish English speakers. The findings of the study were that, despite the two versions of DCTs, similar responses were recorded: there was no significant difference between responses given in Swedish and those given in English by native Swedish speakers. When compared with the control group, the Swedish L1 responses differed from the responses given by Scottish English speakers. The Swedish participants accepted compliments more than the Scottish, while the Scottish used positive elaborations more. Swedish participants used neutral elaborations and denial more and the researcher speculated this to be a result of Swedish social norms, such as modesty. In the case of giving compliments, there was no significant difference between compliment responses given in Swedish and those given in English by native Swedish speakers which could be a result of a pragmatic transfer.

3.3.3 Studies of compliments responses in Asian English learners

Cedar and Setiadi (2016) conducted a study to investigate how Indonesian and Thai English major students responded to English compliments. A DCT instrument was distributed to 35 Indonesian and 35 Thai university students. Subjects were expected to show a difference, despite having similar Asian heritage, because of their different cultural backgrounds and value systems. This difference was expected to be attributable mostly to speaking different languages and practicing different religions (Islam and Buddhism); this strongly indicates a difference of the social norms of the two societies. The findings of the study suggested that both groups were inclined to accept compliments and tended to deny compliments (e.g. No, not at all) frequently to show modesty and humility, which are social norms of cultures described by Cedar and Setiadi.

However, the two groups differed in their strategy use: Thai students accepted compliments more while Indonesian students were more likely to reject them. In addition, compliment topics were

different between the two groups: Indonesians were positive towards compliments on ability but negative towards compliments on possessions whereas Thais were positive towards compliments on possessions but negative towards compliments on appearance. The study concluded that, despite apparent similar Asian backgrounds, English was used differently by the two groups, which reflects the importance of culture in language learning.

Compliments in Chinese have been studied extensively. One major study was conducted by Chen (2009), replicating a study that had been conducted 17 years previously. The study looked at compliment responses employed by Chinese in the same research site (Xi'an, China) with a similar subject population and American English speakers, adopting a quasi-longitudinal design. A DCT instrument was used to collect data in both studies. The previous findings of 1993 highlighted that rejection was a common compliment response among Chinese participants whereas acceptance was the most common response among the American participants; this was used as a baseline for the replicated study. Chen argued against the usefulness of politeness theory because the theory was unable to explain the data of the Chinese participants and was only able to explain the English participants' data in the first study. However, in the revisited version, a significant change was found in terms of accepting compliments, which was as frequent among Chinese speakers as it was for American speakers. The strategies participants adopted depended on the topic of the compliments. In the first study, people preferred to appear humble, whereas in the replicated study, people showed a tendency towards enhancing their self- image and Adapting to Western lifestyle. The author argues that this reflects how economic, political and social changes during the 1990s in China have affected the new generation. Another study by Yuan, (2002) on a variational type of Chinese (Kunming), reported that the acceptance strategy was used extensively to respond to compliments. In line with that, Tang and Zhang (2009) reported that Chinese living in Australia employed acceptance strategies more than rejection strategies. Chen (2009) concluded that the

results of Tang and Zhang (2009) study were similar to results of his study, which could be due to the same influence of the West.

Despite differences in specific findings, Othman (2011) lends support to Chen's (2009) argument that internal changes within a society can change compliment behaviours. In her study of Malay language speakers, Othman analysed compliment exchanges in light of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Participants of the study included English majoring university students who were trained to be fieldworkers, to collect over 1000 compliment exchanges. The responses were collected in Malay, English or code-mixed structures of the two languages. Results showed that, contrary to previous studies of the norms of Malay, participants tended towards adopting a Western-like style by leaning towards accepting compliments rather than habitually rejecting them. This was not the norm in Malaysia, according to the researcher. In this sense, participants appeared to attend to the positive face of speakers by accepting compliments rather than to negative face. This is reported to be expected in a multilingual and a multicultural society with a colonial history and diversity of religions.

In addition, as discussed in other cultural contexts, compliment topic was found to influence the rates of acceptance. Compliments were likely to be rejected if the target of the compliment was a person's personal achievements or attributes, because of the concept of avoiding self-praise in Malay culture. The strategies differed based on the topic: responses followed Malay norms rather than English norms when the topic was culturally sensitive and followed English norms when the topic was not, such as appearance. The language in which the compliment was offered also affected compliment exchanges: code-switching compliments reported a higher acceptance rate than compliments given in English and Malay, but the acceptance rate was closer to English compliments, with more acceptance compared to those offered in Malay.

3.3.4 Studies of compliments responses among Persian speakers

Compliment behaviour has also been researched with regard to Persian language speakers (e.g., Sharifian, 2005; Razi, 2013; Shahsavari, Alimohammadi and Rasekh, 2014; Shabani and Zeinali, 2015). Sharifian (2008) conducted a study of compliment responses produced by Persian speaking learners of English in Iran. The focus of the research was to investigate how cultural conceptualisations interact with speech acts of compliments in the society, namely the concept of *shekastehnafsi* ‘modesty’ and also the effect of context. A DCT instrument was used to collect data both in English and Persian, from the same group of participants. The findings of the study suggested that Persian L2 learners incorporated the use of the *shekastehnafsi* schema widely in both languages. Participants used downgrading, returning compliments and reassigning the compliment to God, parents or teachers. These are common practices, informed by their traditions. The study also reported that some participants used the schema in L2 but not in L1; it was speculated that the use of the schema is active while communicating with others but was not a fixed feature of all interactions, but rather was context dependent. When compared with data from a previous study that involved Anglo-Australian participants (Sharifian 2005), significant differences appeared in that Australians downplayed the compliments but not for the same cultural schema. In terms of context, the results showed that Persian speakers were less likely to reject a compliment about their performance at work, as it might reflect negatively on their work duties. In two studies, Iranians showed a tendency towards an acceptance strategy, despite showing significant differences when compared to native speakers of English, whether Americans (Razi, 2013) or Canadians (Shahsavari, Alimohammadi and Rasekh, 2014). The difference was mainly in their use of micro strategies of acceptance rather than at the macro strategy level as in acceptance versus rejection.

Motaghi-Tabari and Beuzeville (2011) conducted a study of compliments responses speech act produced by immersion and non-immersion groups of Persian speakers of English to examine

whether the immersion group was still affected by their social norms after exposure to Australian culture. Apart from two groups of Iranians, the study included a control group of Anglo Australian participants. The study adopted a modified version of the DCT which was designed and used by Sharifian (2005). All three groups of participants were found to strongly favour agreement strategies when responding to compliments. However, they used different acceptance strategies. When comparing Iranians in Iran with Iranians in Australia, the latter group were found to agree more than their peers in Iran. Transferring credits strategy was also used by the three groups but used differently, as Iranians transferred it to the interlocutors and Australians to someone not present. Iranians in Iran used the credit transfer strategy the most, while the other two groups favoured the history comment strategy more. One important finding was that none of the Iranians in Australia used the request strategy-offering the object of the compliment whereas Iranians in Iran tended to use offering. The researcher explained that this does not necessarily mean they perceive the compliment as a request, but this was in line with social norms to offer the object because 'it does not have any value in front of someone as nice as you, so you can take/have it' (p.33)

While this study was limited to a very small sample, it revealed important findings and is strongly connected to the findings of the current study.

3.3.5 Studies of compliments in varieties of Arabic

Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols (1996) investigated similarities and differences in compliment responses produced by Syrian Arabic and American participants. Participants were American graduate students in Applied Linguistics in the US and Syrians who studied English literature or worked in an English environment in Damascus. The study employed an interview method whereby Syrians conducted the interviews in Arabic and Americans, in English. The findings suggest that both groups preferred to accept or mitigate than to reject. While both groups used similar response types such as agreement or compliment returns, they also showed differences: Syrians were found

to use formulaic expressions such as proverbs, while Americans used appreciation tokens more. One of the problematic formulaic expressions used to respond to compliments is '*m'addam*' meaning 'presented to you', which is a polite ritualistic expression and does not mean that the offer is genuine. Findings from the study also suggested that Arabs preferred longer compliments than Americans and associated length with sincerity. In this sense, saying 'thank you' by an American to an Arab would not be enough and would need to be supplemented by other words, otherwise it would be perceived as a way to end the conversation between interlocutors (see also section 2.3). Farghal and Haggan (2006) investigated compliment behaviour among bilingual Kuwaiti college students. Data were collected through a class project in a discourse analysis course with senior students enrolled in the course; students were instructed to report 8 situations of compliment exchanges on specific topics. The study followed the naturally occurring compliments paid by students to their college friends on campus and the responses they elicited; two-thirds of the data occurred in English, with the remainder either non-verbal, bilingual or in Arabic. Findings suggested that complex responses were higher than simple responses, indicating that Arabic speakers, as in Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols's study, prefer longer compliments. Subjects also reported accepting compliments much more than rejecting them in Arabic and in English. An important observation by the researchers was that acceptance occurred more in English and downgrading occurred more in Arabic. They speculated this was a result of downgrading being linguistically more demanding than acceptance, so it is used more in Arabic and less in English. Offering objects complimented on was frequently higher in Arabic than in English, but the instances in English suggested a case of pragmatic transfer or the use of sociolinguistic knowledge. One finding reported the strong native language influence on compliments, even when produced in English through the use of Arabic formulaic expressions.

AlFalasi (2007) studied the compliment behaviour of Emirati female Arabic speakers consisting of two groups: English and non-English majors' students and one group of American native speakers of English. The data were collected quantitatively using a DCT and qualitatively using interviews. One Emirati group was given the DCT in Arabic, and the other group was given the DCT in English. The study focused on whether females used more politeness strategies than males – as was assumed—and generally showed awareness of topics such as appearance. Findings suggested that the subjects did not produce American native-like responses. Emirati females transferred some of their L1 norms by using literally translated Arabic formulaic expressions, which is a shared finding among other studies on varieties of Arabic. Such expressions were used by both Emirati groups, whether majoring in English or non-English studies. It was hypothesised that this social norm was not significantly affected by the constant contact between the native speakers of English and the Emirati English learners. The participants' interviews showed that misconceptions about English politeness norms of complimenting existed and affected the responses given by the Emirati groups. The study concluded that Emirati English learners used religious prayers in compliments and sometimes jokes, as this is normal within the culture. Emirati English learners also used longer compliments than American native speakers of English.

Most published research into speech acts in Arabic (e.g., compliments, refusals, requests) have been carried out in countries such as Egypt (Morkus, 2014) and Jordan (Bataineh, 2013) and cannot necessarily be assumed to reflect usage in Saudi Arabia. Some comparative studies in the Arab world have established that Saudi speakers use more conservative and religion-based social utterances (AlKhateeb, 2009).

A close inspection of compliment behaviour in Saudi Arabia is discussed next and major studies carried out in the Saudi context are reviewed.

3.3.6 Compliments and compliment responses in the Saudi context

In contrast to the vast body of literature on compliments and compliment responses in Western and Eastern studies, studies in the Saudi context are limited. The first point to notice is the huge time gap between studies which confirm the limited numbers of studies; the main published studies of Saudi compliment behaviour to date are: Salameh (2001), Enssaif (2005), Alamro (2013), Alsalem (2015), Alqahtani, (2016), Alharbi (2017), Alqarni (2017) and Alsohaibani (2017). Some of these are sociolinguistic studies of Arabic speakers and some focus on Saudi English learners.

3.3.6.1 Compliment studies in Saudi Arabia (Before 2010)

As far as can be ascertained, the earliest investigation into Saudi compliment responses was conducted by Salameh (2001). This is a pioneering study that is an important reference for its findings, methodology, and extensive discussions which were drawn on in the design of the present research. Salameh (2001) studied three groups of participants: American English native speakers, Saudi Arabic speakers and Saudi learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia. He used three methods of data collection: DCT, observations and interviews to investigate compliment responses in relation to gender, social status and social distance. His findings revealed that both Americans and Saudi accepted compliments, Americans accepted and rejected more, and Saudis deflected compliments slightly more than Americans. He concluded that the only strategy affected by social distance and social status is deflection. With regard to gender, it was reported that Saudis accepted fewer compliments from the opposite gender in comparison to Americans, who accepted compliments equally from both genders. He reported that Saudi EFL learners showed negative pragmatic transfer when responding to compliments: i.e., they transferred L1 norms into their English. For example, a good number of Saudi participants accepted compliments from a boss or a family member on work they had done because they thought it was their 'duty', which Salameh (2001) called the strategy 'duty acceptance'. The participants also transferred some 'cultural modes of Saudi Arabic to their compliment responses expressed in English' (Salameh 2001, p143). The

study then explored possible factors motivating such a transfer. He reported that pragmatic transfer can explain their use of L1 strategy because there was more similarity to that of the Saudi informants than to that of American informants. It was clear that Islamic beliefs, such as the fear of evil eye, offering items and sense of duty towards their families, influenced Saudi EFL learners' use of compliments was (see 3.2.6.2 on this chapter). Salameh (2001) echoes other researchers in stating that ESL and EFL students find responding to compliments more challenging than initiating them.

Since this initial study, similar studies have been published which makes it possible to evaluate cross-cultural differences and similarities between the two speech acts. Research conducted by Enssaif (2005) involved data from DCTs and self-reports. The research explored how Saudi female students in Saudi Arabia gave and responded to compliments in English. Enssaif focused on testing the participants' ability to give compliments and to respond to compliments appropriately, to people of different social statuses and social distance. Most of the participants used an acceptance strategy in both English and in Arabic, and the participants also showed sensitivity to the social status of the recipient in their production of compliments.

For example, the participants did not respond to teachers' compliments, saying that it would be inappropriate for students to return the compliment in this case. However, as the study involved the participants using compliments with Saudi Arabic speakers, it does not answer the question of whether the participants would use Saudi norms when interacting with native speakers of English.

While students showed a high rate of acceptance this time, in connection conformity with Salameh's (2001) study, they also reconfirmed the effect of social status on their strategy choice. Participants also tended to use intensifiers in compliments.

One of the limitations of Salameh's (2001) study is that it cannot be generalised to all contemporary

Saudis, in the first place because of the social, governmental and cultural shifts and changes that have occurred during the past 20 years in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, any study conducted before 2010 can no longer fully and accurately represent the compliment behaviour of the majority of young Saudi people. However, some strongly held beliefs exist and remain a challenge for religious and social reasons. Secondly, the findings, although interesting and rich, cannot be generalisable because the three groups do not represent a very wide age group: one group consisted of EFL students of 22 years old, whereas the other two groups were above the age of 40. Thirdly, the study relied on Brown and Levinson's theory but did not consider social theories to investigate the reasons behind culture-specific choices made by participants. So, for example, whereas participants' choices were described in terms of notions of politeness in Islam, no further analysis was provided about the influence of context and culture using social frameworks. Enssaif's (2005) findings were also limited as the participants were only females in one university in Saudi Arabia, majoring in English literature. Also, no attempt was made to compare participants with native speakers.

3.3.6.2 Compliment studies in Saudi Arabia (2010-2020)

A study conducted by Alamro (2013) investigated complimenting behaviour in the Najdi community in the capital city, in the Central region. Alamro (2013) focused on the strategies used by the participants in light of relationship, gender and age variables. He analysed a corpus of 592 compliments and compliment responses in Saudi Arabic, collected in natural contexts using three different age groups (young) 18-30, middle-aged (31-50), and old (over 50) respectively. His findings first confirmed that participants used a limited number of syntactic patterns and adjectives, in other words, that as found in studies in other language contexts but also in studies with the same language community, complimenting is linguistically formulaic (Salameh 2001, Enssaif 2005). Alamro (2013) also confirmed that age and social distance affect compliment responses. He found that younger generations accepted compliments more than older generations.

With regard to compliments and social customs, he concluded that offering to give the object complimented on is normal in such a closed community; it would, however, be problematic in cross-cultural settings (see section 3.2.6.2).

As in the studies by Enssaif (2005) and Salameh (2001), Alamro (2013) found that most frequent type of compliment response was acceptance. As discussed in previous studies (e.g. Salameh 2001), topic affected the use of compliments by the two genders. In his study, women complimented each other more than men, whereas compliments were not common among mixed gender groups. Alamro also reported a higher usage of *Mashallah*, ‘May Allah’s grace be upon you’. Within Najdi compliments, the expression was used at a rate of 26% of the total collected number of compliments, which he referred to as possibly indicating a strong belief in the evil eye. The study reconfirmed the preference for the use of adjectives, at a score of 65%, which occurred in the entire data set. This preference was also presented in previous studies, and perhaps refers to the nature of the Arabic language (see section 3.2.6.2).

Alamro’s study, unlike previous studies, drew on three theories to explain the results of the study : variation theory (Labov, 1972), politeness, (Brown and Levinson ,1987) and politeness principles (Leech, 1983) (see 2.4). Variation theory describes the relationship between the dependent linguistic variables and independent social variables (age, gender and relationship) (Chambers, 1995 cited in Alamro 2013).The use of variation theory was important in this study as the Najdi dialect has a feature of sounding flattering in comparison with other dialects in Saudi Arabia, because it is characterised by a high density of flattery vocabulary as well as in-group markers. Variation theory helped to interpret the data and explain any differences found in the forms and strategies of compliments due to region-specific social factors as well as provide reasons of why the results cannot be generalised to other parts of Saudi Arabia^a. Leech’s principles were employed in order to

identify the regional distinctiveness of the conversations such as a preference for the tact principle. However, perhaps the most serious limitation of this study in relation to the current project is that it focused on the dialect of a single speech community in the central region of Saudi Arabia. The compliments were given in Arabic, and comparisons were not made with other groups, e.g., native vs. non-native speakers. The study employed the observation method, which is not a recommended method to use in speech act studies as it does not render the findings comparable with those of other studies, and thus allow possible generalisations.

Three years after Alamro's study, Alqahtani (2016) replicated the study but with a focus on the middle province of Saudi Arabia which consists of various cities, villages and dialects that are very different from Alamro (2013)'s participants. The region is more diverse than the capital region and is representative of the diversity that characterises a large country like Saudi Arabia. The researcher focused on compliment production and compliment responses and their relationship to age and gender variables. He analysed a corpus of 162 compliments and compliment responses in Saudi Arabic, collected in natural contexts through observing three different age groups of participants: a young group (18-36), a middle-aged group (36-50) and an older group (50+) group. Some of his findings are in line with those of Alamro (2013). He confirmed that, in the middle province, age played a role in influencing complimenting behaviour: older participants preferred compliments on personality whereas younger participants preferred compliments on appearance.

Alqhatani also confirmed Salameh's (2001) findings by reporting the existence of evil eye, protection words, and the recurring use of religious expressions when making compliments. The difference between the findings of these two studies (Alamro, 2013, and Alqhatani, 2016) was principally in the type of compliments given. Some participants in Alqhatani's study used ironic compliments in 13.56% of instances and compliments for personal goals in 6.18% of instances.

Concerning the wording of compliments, he found that the majority of proverbs and lines of poetry

were used by the middle-aged (36-50) and (50+) male groups; the young group (18-36); particularly males) used swear words and irony as in the form of mock complimenting. An example of mock compliments, as illustrated by the researcher, was in saying 'You are a professional driver!'. The driver's response was to laugh at the mock compliment because he knew that the implicit meaning was that 'You are a bad driver.' In the middle province region, it seems that implicit compliments exist more than in the Najdi region. One of main differences between the two studies is the use of different theories: Alghatani explained his findings with reference to Grice's cooperative principle and maxims of conversation (1975). He highlights how using sarcasm in compliments violates Grice's maxims of quality and manner. The use of jokes and swear words to compliment in this study seemed to affect the cooperative principles of conversations and hindered the quality of compliments.

One of the limitations of the study is that the researchers focused on a single speech community and there was no attempt to include a target or control group. Furthermore, the use of observation alone is not enough to capture compliment events. In terms of theory, the researcher did not consider the rapport-management framework to explain sarcastic compliments, mock compliments and compliments based on personal goals as reported in his findings. So-called mock compliments can be categorised under personal goals in the category of rapport-management's (Spencer-Oatey, 2008) which theoretically explains what might motivate this type of compliment behaviour. However, the researcher did not investigate this phenomenon any further.

Alsalem (2015) study is the only one to date that investigates Saudis who have had a substantial amount of exposure to English culture. Alsalem explored compliment response types between Saudi learners of English and native speakers of American English to identify possible cultural and gender differences in the compliment responses. The study focused on academic contexts and used the research tool, Multiple Choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT), which includes 4 imaginary

scenarios in academic settings. In the first two situations, participants exchange compliments, male and female professors to male and female students and in the other two situations, female-male classmates exchanged compliments with interlocutors of opposite sex. The first two situations examined students' responses to compliments about their achievement by a male and a female professor. The third and fourth examined students' compliments response to compliments from their classmates about their achievement. The study revealed no significant differences with regard to responding to compliments from a member of the opposite gender in this case. The study illustrated that Saudi students were more likely to transfer the compliment by giving credit for their achievement to their professor, regardless of whether they were male or female. All female and male students used similar types of compliment responses, regardless of the professor's gender. Where the compliment events happened among classmates of opposite genders, there was a tendency among the two groups (Saudis and Americans) to accept more and attribute the compliments about their academic achievement to hard work, if the compliments were given by the opposite gender. The researcher also reported that there were more similarities than differences among the two groups of Saudis and Americans; Saudi participants also tended more than Americans to accept but with a disagreement, accept with self-doubt and to disagree, e.g. 'Thanks but I do not think I did very well'. These differences 'may be attributed to their L1 cultural values' (Alsalem, 2015, p.45).

With regard to gender differences, the researcher did not report any statistically significant differences among Saudis. In fact, gender differences were found to be more statistically significant among the American students than Saudi students. However, these similarities and unexpected results for Saudi participants were explained by the researchers as a result of having Saudi participants who had spent a substantial amount of time in the US. This was seen as a major factor that could possibly lead to the gradual disappearance of some of the cultural and gender differences.

The researcher did not explain why the Americans were found to be more sensitive to gender than

Saudis in this study. This was also the case in previous studies, as gender did not affect Saudis' performance, as far as compliment and compliment responses were concerned. The instrument (multiple choice discourse completion task) used in the study was one of the limitations of the study, as it did not offer students freedom to expand on their responses. Also, the study sample involved students who were all enrolled in one university in the United States, which also limits diversity.

Alqarni's (2017) study is the only study (to the best of the researcher's knowledge) that discusses both the speech acts of complimenting and compliment responses of Saudi English learners at the same time in the Southern region of Saudi Arabia. It is also the only study to analyse responses across conversation topics and gender in Saudi Arabia; it involved 80 Saudi participants who were studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Using the discourse completion test (DCT), the researcher investigated:

1. The semantic and syntactic patterns used by the participants to express compliments in English and to respond to compliments:
2. The role of the topic of conversation in the participant's realisation of compliments:
3. Gender differences and choice of strategies with regard to L1 norms.

From the results of this study it was concluded that the dominant pattern of forms was unbound semantic formulas, either explicit or implicit; participants used different forms which included a mixed variety of adjectives, verbs, quantifiers and nouns. Nonetheless, the dominant pattern was in the use of adjectives. This reconfirmed previous findings that Arabic speakers, including Saudis, have a preference for using adjectives in complimenting. This is also in line with the finding in the study by Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols (1996) that Arabic speakers use longer forms of compliments, and that adjectives rather than verbs tend to be used in giving compliments.

Regarding the topic and setting of conversation, the study concluded that when situations were sensitive, the complimenter tried to shift the compliment from the person to the object, to avoid any offence. Socio-religious rules were found to affect compliment behaviour. For example, socially delicate topics, such as the cleanliness of one's house, increased the likelihood in which implicit compliments would be used due to religious links. It also confirmed that there was a consistent impulse to return a compliment with a compliment, which reflects the social norm of using compliments to build solidarity. Further, acceptance appeared to be the dominant form of compliment response, which supports previous studies (Salameh, 2001, Alamro, 2013, Alqhatani, 2016, Enssiaf, 2005). The study also suggests there has been a change of behaviour in the younger Saudis. The author argues that this younger generation is undergoing a semantic cultural change in their responses to compliments, seen in their use of certain vocabulary items to respond to situations that have not been used before. Alqarni suggests that their use of compliments has been influenced by the English language and by Western culture. The study also found no significant differences between the compliment strategies used by males and females, despite a difference in their compliment response strategies. Males accepted compliments more than females and females used acceptance strategy slightly more than males. It was also reported that men tended to offer more performance-based compliments while women tended to offer more appearance-based compliments.

The results of this study are remarkably similar to those of the Alamro (2013), in terms of both similarities and differences. Alamro (2013) also reported that acceptance was high, adjective use was dominant and that topics affected compliment and compliment responses. However, Alamro (2013) differed from Alqarni (2017) in that participants in this study used a limited number of vocabulary items and syntactic patterns. Furthermore, unlike Salameh (2001) and Alsalem (2015) in the case of Saudi English learners complimenting in English, the researcher did not find that compliments were formulaic.

The above discussion confirms the findings of Alqhatani (2016) that complimenting behaviour of ESL Arabic speakers tends to be diverse from one region to another in Saudi Arabia. This may be because the previous study focused on a specific region rather than taking samples from different regions of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, collecting data in an unstructured setting (observation and note-taking), as discussed in Rees-Miller (2011), is different from data collected in structured settings as Alharbi (2017) did (discussed below), using DCT. The limitation of this study was that it focused on students from one university in Saudi Arabia; the researcher did not consider any comparison with a control group or with another Saudi group.

Alharbi (2017) studied the compliment strategies of two generations of Saudi females (64 female lecturers vs. 62 female students). It is the only study to date with a focus on the age variable, although it has been identified as influential in previous studies. The importance of this study is that it examines the responses of Saudi English learners in Saudi Arabia to compliments from an English-speaking outsider. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used and the data in analysed in relation to how gender, pragmatic transfer and intergenerational interaction influenced the strategies used by lecturers and students to respond to compliments on language ability. Lecturers were complimented on a well written paper published in an English-medium journal and students were given compliments on a well-written assignment in English. The strategies were analysed. The study found that acceptance was one of the most used strategies among her participants. The analysis showed that the lecturers and students favoured the acceptance strategy the most when responding to compliments in English in general. However, lecturers tended to accept compliments on their written language performance more than students, and students tended to question the compliments or return compliments more. The researcher explained the findings by saying that students felt 'less self-assured than the older generation lecturers and thus hesitated to agree with the compliment received' (Alharbi 2017,p. 61). However, the lecturers were more

reluctant than students to accept compliments on their spoken English ability because they felt they might lack that ability. The students were more able to accept compliments on their spoken English ability, with questions and compliment returns as well. The explanation proposed by the researcher was that the lecturers were more confident than the students because of their age and their belief in their language abilities and found it easier to accept compliments on their writing ability than on their spoken English. The students, on the other hand, accepted compliments on both their written and spoken language abilities.

In the interviews, when participants got asked about the reasons for their acceptance of the compliments, lecturers responded that if they felt confident and believed the compliment, 'I need to thank her first, and this is really a fact, because when I write a paper it takes time to write a good one'. Accepting a compliment was also seen as polite, the 'polite thing to do' (p.67). In interviews, students also mentioned politeness as a reason to accept compliments. The students answered some interview questions by referring to their acquired English strategies of watching TV and American movies. For example, a student explained 'Yeah, I would say 'thank you', it's because I watch a lot of movies, you know and try to pick up the language from the movies, yeah I don't know if she really means it.' This politeness view may explain the difference between students' strategies and lecturers' strategies and why the students engaged in pragmatic transfer.

One interesting finding of this study is that some students used religious phrases to respond to compliments but none of the lecturers did. The pragmatic transfer was found in some students' responses as students 'appeared to be anxious about accepting compliments without the mention of God's name in the compliment' (p.88). It could be linked, the researcher suggests, to the students'

lack of exposure to native English speakers' culture. While the lecturers possessed considerable intercultural competence because they had lived or travelled abroad, the students had limited exposure to other cultures (Alharbi 2017, p.97).

The researcher concluded that lecturers' familiarity with Western culture might explain this, and their awareness that concerns such as with the 'evil' eye, are culturally specific and irrelevant in intercultural communication contexts. It was also reported that some of the students who had studied abroad responded in a manner similar to that of the lecturers, suggesting that exposure to other cultures may be more a significant factor than age.

Some of the findings were similar to those of Alamro's (2013) study. As in that study, age and topic made a difference when responding to compliments. With regard to compliments on appearance and possessions, both generations accepted compliments with confidence, with no significant differences between the two groups. The researcher attributed this to being confident in the choices they made related to managing their appearance. However, a significant difference was found in their responses to compliments about their personality or character. Lecturers used a scale down strategy more than students, who used appreciation tokens more. The age factor seemed to influence this greatly, as older generations showed a great modesty to accept compliments on their personality. Both lecturers and students were equally unlikely to reject compliments about their character or personality (two terms used by the researcher). The explanation for this was that both groups were trying to show a good character to represent their culture favourably to non-native visitors who complimented them on their characters, as per the situation of the questionnaire. Therefore, they accepted the compliments gracefully. For example, helping someone to pick up a purse from the floor. As for the limitations, the researcher studied only one city in Saudi Arabia (Makkah in the western region) with a focus of females only. There was no comparison with native speakers or any other Saudi groups.

As in all the previous studies suggest the importance of religion and Islamic values and beliefs in Saudi complimenting behaviour, it is pertinent to review a study with a focus on the influence of religion on speech acts.

3.3.6.3 Religion and compliments in Saudi Arabia

In light of the influence of religion on language use, Alsohaibani (2017) explored the following speech acts: greeting, responding to greeting, thanking, complimenting and responding to complimenting. He analysed compliment and compliment responses in Saudi Arabic with regard to three main variables: age, gender and religion. The study utilised different research tools such as role play, ethnographic interviews and experimental measurement of participants' linguistic awareness. The data shows that religious expressions play a significant role in complimenting behaviour in Saudi Arabia. Alsohaibani discusses the ideologies and motivations behind using religious expressions in everyday language, including preferences for using certain expressions in communicative events.

The research confirmed the importance of religion in societies such as Saudi Arabia, in which religion is institutionalised. The researcher attributed the use of religious expressions to positive politeness in such societies and the participants showed awareness of the factors influencing their use. He found that the use of religious expressions is not arbitrary but follows patterns of repetition and elaboration, both of which depend on the specific topics of compliments. For example, in a post-role play interview, a participant elaborated on using a religious expression when complimenting parents on having 5 children:

'When I said 'MashAllah', I really meant it, as I was surprised. I have to say it, as something may happen to his children, then I would be blamed for not saying 'MashAllah' or mentioning God.' (p. 264).

The study also illustrated how the evil eye concept cannot be separated from complimenting in Saudi Arabia. A participant elaborated on this:

'I said 'MashAllah' to show her that I do not have envy and also not to strike her or any of her children [with an evil eye] even without my knowing' (p.265)

The study demonstrated that religion was important in all the participants' speech acts, including thanking, greetings and compliments and there were consistent similarities between participants, regardless of age and gender. At the same time, in line with previously discussed studies, the study confirmed the importance of age in compliment events. The older generations, particularly females, tended to use a very high proportion of religious phrases when offering compliments and invoked these types of utterances for complimenting more than younger generations. Some limitations of the study are that the researcher did not study EFL learners or the existence of religious expressions in pragmatic transfer situations. The study considered speech act theory and politeness theory despite religion being a social practice that needs to be discussed within a social framework. Also, there was no attempt to make any comparison with another Saudi group or include a control group and it was conducted on a small sample in one region of Saudi Arabia in an urban workplace.

The last section in this chapter provides a summary of the questions that have been addressed in the literature about compliment behaviour in Saudi Arabia and the questions that still need to be addressed.

3.3.6.4 Summary of findings of studies of compliments in Saudi Arabia

All studies show that age is a significant factor in compliment behaviour, so it is safe to say that the age variable influences compliment behaviour. Older generations prefer compliment topics to focus

on personality traits and achievements, whereas younger generations prefer compliments about appearance. Topic, social status and social distance affect compliments and compliment responses, but gender as a variable does not appear to influence compliments significantly.

In Arabic, Saudis use formulaic sentences to produce compliments or respond to compliments. Even in different regions and minor dialects of Saudi Arabia, compliments were reported to be formulaic. Certain religious expressions and concepts such as the 'evil eye' are found in the studies, regardless of age and educational background or location. In other words, socioreligious roles and culture-specific norms have an impact on complimenting behaviour among Saudis. Finally, the indication of diversity within one country suggests that these studies cannot be generalised to all Saudis. People who come from different regions within the same country may behave and think differently. At the same time, the studies did not report any major discrepancies in their findings, regardless of their sample or chosen methodology, which confirms the likelihood that their common findings are valid.

3.3.6.5 Ideas to explore

None of the studies carried out in Saudi Arabia compared two groups of Saudis in two settings, for example, an immersion environment compared to a non-immersion environment or in a native English community compared to Lingua Franca communities. Possible comparisons are Saudis in the UK and Saudis in Malaysia or Pakistan. The findings of the studies reviewed in this chapter suggest the need to investigate the Saudis who live in an immersion environment, and the effect of living abroad on the use of strategies or level of pragmatic awareness. This would shed light on which cultural concepts are strongly held and which ones are more likely to fade or change, based on the topic of the compliment. While previous studies have described preferences and attitudes

towards personality versus appearance type compliments, the reasons or beliefs behind these preferences have yet to be explored.

Many of the studies of compliments in Saudi and non-Saudi societies suggest the need to incorporate the teaching of pragmatics in EFL and ESL contexts but do not discuss what can be teachable or not in terms of pragmatic teaching in classrooms. The following section highlights some important concepts within the field of teaching pragmatics.

3.4 Teaching pragmatics

Teaching pragmatics in the L2 is supported by many researchers (e.g. Taguchi 2011, Alcon-Sole 2015, McConachy, 2013), as it is believed to help in recognising the differences and similarities between L1 and L2. This is supposed to enable students to comprehend as well as recall information in real life. The importance of pointing out these differences in a classroom discussion is because some socio-pragmatic mistakes are not easy to correct by others, as they reflect one's beliefs and values. Studies indicate that pragmatic awareness can help learners of English in high imposition situations, as some studies report that low proficiency students handle such situations by using longer responses or mitigators to soften face threats (Taguchi 2011, p.285). While to many applied linguists this may seem related to their English level, pragmatic awareness can improve the situation.

Increasing awareness of the role of pragmatic knowledge in communication helps learners to utilise meta-pragmatic knowledge to analyse L2 components and improve their performance. Encouraging students to notice patterns has been demonstrated to be effective in a number of studies that investigated the study-abroad experience, Glaser (2017) reported the benefits of explicitly teaching pragmatics to language students. In Glaser's study, two groups of language learners in two different

contexts showed awareness of differences, after spending time abroad, even when the groups did not fully get the chance to practise what they had learnt in a given context. In a similar study, Alcon-Sole (2015) looked at the development of pragmatic competence and the effect of the length of stay abroad on email requests. She reported that there was an immediate effect on production although this was not sustained. While there seems to be a consensus on the fact that it is possible to teach pragmatics, the debate continues whether greater benefits can be obtained from explicit or implicit intervention. (Alcon-Sole 2015, p.63)

Explicit pragmatic teaching has been demonstrated to be effective in terms of pragmatic awareness (Alcon- Soler, 2015, Alerwi and Alzahrani, 2020). Based on the results of her study, Alsalem (2015, p.52) also encouraged explicit instruction to Saudis studying in the US and suggested that exposure to immersion in the L2 culture led to pragmatic development. The role of cultural information in improving performance of learners of English was discussed as closely related to pragmatic transfer (Taguchi, 2011). Other factors included linguistic proficiency and length of stay in the L2 community. Some recent studies have supported the role of cultural information in teaching English in the Saudi context (Alerwi and Alzahrani, 2020) and in Western contexts (Glaser, 2017; Ren, 2014; McConachy, 2013). The next section gives an overview of teaching English in Saudi Arabia, with a focus on pragmatics.

3.5 Teaching English and pragmatics in Saudi Arabia

Within the Saudi context, Alasmari and Khan (2014) reported that the difference between native and non- native English teachers was in their perception of teaching English as a foreign language. Their findings suggested that, while teachers in Saudi Arabia acknowledged the need for EFL to change for pedagogical purposes, they insisted on language accuracy (Alasmari and Khan 2014, p. 91). Non-native teachers of English in Saudi Arabia focused on the accurate use of grammar and

accents. This illustrates how foreign language teaching in Saudi Arabia has been slow to respond to current changes to the teaching of English and the tendency to focus on accuracy in language teaching rather than practical applications. Cohen (2016) studied native and nonnative speakers of English with regard to their teaching of pragmatics and what their experiences suggest about their knowledge. The study revealed that while there were many similarities between the teachers, there were also differences. The study showed that non-native speakers suffered from lack of appropriate knowledge of pragmatics in certain situations while native English teachers used their intuition to teach some aspects of pragmatics such as culture.

It is evident, even in European countries, that the issue of introducing a target culture is problematic, but it is more challenging in a society like Saudi Arabia. In countries where English has a foreign status, like Saudi Arabia, the problem of understanding the meaning of words without knowing the culture is challenging, and so teaching culture is indeed inseparable from language teaching. Farooq, Soomro, and Umer (2018) investigated how teachers of English approached the culture of the target language inside the classroom and acknowledged that 'English language teachers face problems to certain extent while teaching English language and explaining the cultural context in various situations' p.178).

AlAsmari and Khan (2014) suggested that teachers in Saudi Arabia do acknowledge the importance of teaching culture but, the issue is that this is only put into practice in a very limited way. Farooq, Soomro, and Umer (2018) pointed out that teachers of English in Saudi Arabia are limited by the need to strictly follow the curriculum and by time constraints. Nevertheless, teachers are encouraged to incorporate multi-cultural activities to foster cultural knowledge or competence, which is now widely regarded as an essential fifth language skill within SLA research.

A recent pioneering study in this area was conducted by Alerwi and Alzahrani (2020), describing how teaching pragmatics is useful in improving the use of speech acts, including compliment responses. The study focused on the effect of using English American sitcoms (The Big Bang Theory, Friends, and Seinfeld) to improve EFL students' use of speech acts. The study consisted of a pre-and post-test format, a quantitative closed-ended questionnaire that measured students' knowledge before and after viewing programmes three times a week for one hour in the classroom. The study revealed that there was a great improvement in the students' use of targeted speech acts. The students' attitudes towards the use of sitcoms was regarded as encouraging, which could be due to the humorous nature of sitcoms. As this study was the first in the field, one of its recommendations is to look into this aspect qualitatively and use other task-based methods for teaching pragmatics and improving the use of speech acts.

Alsuhaibani (2020) studied developing pragmatic competence in Saudi Arabia with a special focus on compliment responses. The study employed DCT to investigate the effectiveness of pragmatic instruction on compliment responses through both consciousness-raising instruction and corpus-based instruction. Three groups of students who received different instructions, were compared. The study found significant differences between the two groups (consciousness, corpus) and the control group. However, the study did not report any significant differences between the consciousness and corpus groups. The researcher used questionnaires to find out student's opinions on the importance of pragmatic instructions; the results showed that 96% of the participants believed that pragmatic instruction of compliment responses is important.

Students' feedback notes included 'It should be mandatory' and 'We need it just as we need writing and speaking courses' (Alsuhaibani 2020, p.14)

3.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to cover the topics related to compliment behaviour and to survey the related literature. It started by introducing the nature of compliments within the concept of politeness and its key role in communication. This was followed by a discussion of the functions of compliments in theories and across cultures. Research into stereotypical ideas and differences in cultural background of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom illustrates the potential challenges for EFL Saudi students. The chapter also reviewed compliment studies carried out in different contexts (Western, Eastern and in Saudi Arabia) highlighting interesting findings and pointing out limitations. The chapter then discussed the role of teaching pragmatics in general and specifically, to teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

The next chapter presents the methodology and data collection procedure of the present research.

Chapter Four: Methodology and Research Design

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one is a methodological overview, examining a range of possible research methods used within linguistic and more specifically, compliment research. This is followed by a particular focus on the DCT (discourse completion task) as a data-gathering instrument and an overview of the advantages of the method and the arguments against it. Part two presents the research elements (participants, situations topics, design principles). Next, the pilot study is described, including any changes made to the research design based on the results of the pilot study. Then the chapter gives an overview of the analytic procedure in this study, notably the use of descriptive and inferential statistics in the quantitative and qualitative analyses.

The quantitative analysis was based on the classification (from the literature) of different compliment production types into explicit, implicit and opt out strategies, and compliment responses into acceptance, deflection and rejection strategies. The use of these strategies is compared across the different groups of participants: British English native speakers (British NS), Saudi KSA (Saudi English learners in Saudi Arabia), Saudi UK (Saudi English learners in the United Kingdom). The qualitative analysis was conducted using NVivo to capture examples and classify them into themes. Overall observations are presented at the end.

4.2 Part One

The research addressed the following research questions.

1. What are the characteristics of Saudi learners' complimenting behaviour in English?
2. Does this complimenting behaviour differ between the two groups of Saudi learners of English (Saudi UK and Saudi KSA), and between these two Saudi groups and native speakers of English?
If so, how?
3. What are the possible reasons behind the use of social and religious references in compliment strategies?

4.3 Methodology overview

The nature of any research is determined by what the existing knowledge about a topic is, and what are the research questions we have about the topic. The answer to these two questions will guide the choice of the best methodological approach to answering the research questions established about a topic (Halperin and Heath 2012, p.26).

In social sciences, the causes and consequences of human actions are the main focus to uncover.

Because the knowledge is socially contextualised, the primary aim of social science is to achieve an understanding of human behaviour through an interpretation of the meanings, beliefs, and ideas that people use when giving reasons for actions. In intercultural communication, it is not enough to gather data to understand the specific and general ideas. That is why it is essential to have approaches to explain the data (House, 2018). A qualitative approach allows the researcher to investigate the meaning of ideas, beyond the numbers generated by a quantitative approach. The main purpose of a qualitative research approach is to understand and that of quantitative research is to explain. Qualitative research seeks to understand the values and beliefs of a phenomenon. In order to capture this, researchers seek to understand human behaviour through people's experiences. Quantitative research serves to explain the intensity or frequency of a phenomenon. In order to

capture this, researchers can test data of human behaviour as well as rely on regularities of numbers. Researchers have different ideas about the use of these methodological approaches. House (2018, p. 7) suggested that 'it is important not to be too trusting about the results of quantitative research'. On the other hand, Kvale (1994) explained that one of the objections against qualitative research is that it cannot be scientific because it relies on human understanding. The subjectivity of qualitative approaches leads many researchers to doubt their validity because it does not test hypotheses and can only be exploratory. House (2018, p.9) explains that:

A combination of the two in a mixed method approach is often useful, as results are improved in the case of research projects that involve highly complex phenomena.

In this project, a mixed method approach was adopted, to integrate the results from both qualitative and quantitative approaches, enabling this research to have a fairly generalisable result of the social values and beliefs as well as the language ability of both Saudi and British communities to explain reasons behind participant's choices of strategies. First, the mixed method approach combines hard data (quantitative) and soft data (qualitative) to provide the best answers to the research questions. It would not have been enough to rely on the frequency of responses in this project to attain the research's objective because it seeks to gain a deeper understanding of participants' behaviour; this would not have been feasible through the results of descriptive and inferential statistics alone. For example, some questionnaire situations were not statistically significant but when explored through a qualitative approach, generated deeper meanings. Therefore, the mixed method approach allowed for a deeper analysis.

The next section discusses linguistics data collection methods.

4.4 Linguistic data collection methods

Clark and Bangerter (2004, p. 25) divide the data that is collected in linguistic research into three broad categories: intuited, natural and elicited. Intuited data are created by the researcher: they represent what is assumed to be normal usage, based on the researcher's own knowledge of the language. Jucker (2009) explained that this method does not ask people to produce actual data for analysis but works with reflections on language. Early studies of pragmatics, such as Austin (1975), Grice (1975) and Searle (1969), were predicated on intuited data. Such studies have made a substantial contribution to the development of some of the underlying principles of pragmatic theory, but they have been criticised on the grounds that they are idealisations and based on philosophical approaches, which do not necessarily represent genuine usage.

This shortcoming can be overcome by analysing natural data, in other words, instances of actual spoken or written usage in real-life communication, by language users other than the researcher. Particularly in the case of spoken data, therefore, the researcher cannot assume what would be said, but must conduct fieldwork, carefully observing and recording what is actually said in any given context. The natural data method is proposed as best suited for speech act research. Manes and Wolfson (1981) assert that it is 'the only reliable method for collecting data about the way compliments, or indeed, any other speech act functions' (p.115). However, this method too has its limitations.

Kasper (1999) explained that there are two major problems with the method, starting with the most difficult part of natural data collection method which is gaining access to research sites. She further states that some observations cannot only rely on field notes and permission is required for either audio or video recordings, which is not easy to obtain in institutions. It is also subject to

researcher's bias.

Clark and Bangerter (2004) describe what normally happen in fieldwork:

You are forced to choose what quarry to track, where to track it and what to record, and these lead to their own biases. And in the field, it is hard to infer what causes what (p.26).

This also brings up the observer's paradox effect in natural data collection, which refers to the effect of the presence of the researcher on the observed phenomena. Labov (1972) argues that the 'observer's paradox' can never be completely overcome. As a result of its shortcomings, Jucker (2009) argues that the natural data method is 'strictly empirical' and indeed 'time-consuming'.

The natural data method is beneficial for certain research topics, but not entirely for speech acts and comparable data of different languages; the reason for this is that the element being researched may not occur in any given normal interactions. There is no guarantee that the speech act under investigation will occur at all or enough tokens will be produced and collected since the researcher does not have much control over informants (Yuan 2002, p.275).

One alternative method to overcome these shortcomings is offered by the elicitation method.

Elicitation in this context requires researchers to prompt speakers to produce certain utterances.

According to House (2018), elicitation methods such as 'elicited discourse and role plays derive from, and exist for, the goals of researchers', and these are best used in research studies that seek to identify certain language aspects of L2 learners or in intercultural studies. For example, researchers can ask participants in role-plays to converse about a topic, in order to study their apology or compliment speech act strategies. Natural and elicited speech can support each other, but each serves a different goal.

In compliment research studies, Kasper (1999) states that note taking (natural data method) can be a suitable method to investigate compliment production but not compliment responses. The former is

a single-turn speech event while the latter is a two-turn speech event and can reveal how participants respond to as well as manage, compliments. In the case of research on both speech acts, it is therefore advisable to adopt the elicitation method in order to capture both events. According to House (2018), collecting natural and elicited data differ mainly in the purpose of the interaction. These methods can support each other, and do not necessarily invalidate each other. The problem with natural discourse, unlike elicited data, is that it depends on the speakers' own goals and does not necessarily serve the researcher's goal, whereas with elicited data, the researcher and the participant cooperate.

There is no wrong or right method, but the chosen method depends on the aim of the research; there should be a balance between the effort and expected outcome of the method chosen in research studies. Each one of them can be used independently when the other method is not useful. The ultimate research goal should be the determinant, and if the time and/or effort of the researcher outweighs the outcome of the method, the method is not suitable for the project. The next section discusses the main methods applied in compliment research.

4.5 Compliment research

In the case of compliment research, the intuition method would consider what makes a compliment a compliment, which is not what this project is about. Furthermore, the focus was not in trying to locate compliments in a corpus or in an observation setting, which is what a researcher of natural data might aim to find. What made the elicitation method better in the case of compliment production and compliment responses, is that it addressed the research goals of this project, as the natural data method would not allow the collection of a large sample of comparable datasets in a short time. This comparability, for instance, would not be feasible using a natural data collection method. Jucker (2009, p.1618) emphasises that the DCT method elicits 'more stereotyped

responses, which will reveal the actual cross-cultural differences in a sharper contrast'. This is beneficial in the case of comparing native and nonnative speaker data. Furthermore, the elicitation method, in the case of compliments, is appropriate in identifying compliment strategies Jucker (2009) but does not provide insights into demographic information because these are typically controlled by the researchers.

The elicitation method was chosen for this project for a number of reasons. The main reason is provided in a description of the method by Clark and Bangerter (2004, p. 25); who labelled the 'a laboratory method' because 'with experiments, you invite people into the laboratory, induce them to produce, comprehend or judge samples of language, and measure their reactions'. Similarly, Jucker (2009, p.1632) argues that 'it is even possible to control the relevant variables, at the cost, of course, of the naturalness of the data'.

The method looks at language use; it enables the researcher to control variables without interference and is not so vulnerable to the observer's paradox. In this research, comparison is the key concept behind finding the differences or similarities between the two Saudi groups and then comparing their use of compliments to that of British native speakers. It was thus feasible only by employing the elicited method, rather than the natural method. In addition, controlling the variables serves the research goal, which is not possible through the use of natural methods such as field notes or video taped conversations. In the CCSARP project, Blum-Kulka (1984, p.198) stated 'in order to ensure cross-cultural comparability, it was decided to obtain the data by the use of a controlled elicitation procedure'.

The following section examines the natural and elicitation methods in more detail. Three common methods will be presented in the next sections: observations, interviews and role-plays.

4.6 Ethnography ‘natural’ methods

4.6.1 Observations

One of the most important natural methods is observation, which can be of two types: systematic or non-systematic. In systematic observation, the researcher has an agenda with pre-determined categories to follow, in non-systematic observation, there are no such constraints. From these two types emerge natural observation and controlled observation. In the former, the researcher does not control the variables, whilst the latter takes place in a controlled environment, such as occurs in laboratory observation in the natural sciences. In the social sciences, natural is much more common controlled observation. Participant observation is one type of natural observation. Kawulich (2005, p. 1) describes participant observation as:

The process that enables researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities.

This provides a rich data for any research by capturing real talk and emotion in everyday lives. It is also helpful in research into sensitive issues, as it specifically captures nonverbal expression of feelings. The main disadvantages of this method for the current research are that it is time-consuming and takes place in contexts in which the occurrence of compliments is not guaranteed.

4.7 Elicitation methods

4.7.1 Interviews

The interview is an elicitation tool widely used in social research because it enables researchers to interact with participants in a structured way. Interviews are commonly classified into structured, semi-structured and unstructured (or open) interviews, depending on the manner in which they are conducted, and the types of questions asked (Merriam, 2015). Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p. 14)

describe an interview as

An interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, [which] sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasises the social situatedness of research data.

House (2018) states:

The goals of interviews are commonly said to tap culturally salient meanings of communicative practices, generalised culturally transmitted knowledge, attitudes, as well as details of long-past events stored in long-term memory. (p.6)

Although the previously mentioned features are important in the case of small-scale research, the current research was looking for a large number of participants who behave and think alike, in order to compare datasets as well as to make some possible generalisations. Interviews, therefore, do not serve best the purpose of the research, as the number of participants is usually less than 20.

Interviews take time, effort, and resources (Walliman, 2015); in a project such as the present one, with its narrow focus on compliments and responses, the data obtained from interviews would be likely not include many of the required features. Consequently, interviews were not considered the appropriate tool.

4.7.2 Role-play

Role-play, another elicitation method, has been widely used to explore the speech act behaviour of native and non-native speakers of a language (see for example, Felix-Brasdefer, 2010a). It is a method 'that elicits spoken data in which two interlocutors assume roles under predefined experimental conditions' (Felix-Brasdefer 2010b, p. 47). Two types of role-play have been identified by researchers: open role play and closed role play (Kasper and Dahl 1991). Open role play allows for natural turn-taking and therefore can be a lengthy process. Closed role plays, in which participants are provided with a script and asked to perform certain tasks, are similar to

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questionnaires in terms of the controlled variables and limited interactions.

Role-play was not adopted for the current research. A major reason was that asking L2 learners in KSA to perform an imaginary situation would be challenging and demanding in terms of time, effort and outcome. As Kasper (2008) explains:

Second language speakers with limited target language proficiency may be faced with an additional difficulty if they are required to interact in an imagined context with no real-life history and consequences (p.291).

One of the participant groups in the present study, Saudi KSA, was situated overseas from the researcher, and collecting data would have necessitated extensive travel, which was not possible given the limitations of time and resources. Thus, it did not have the potential to yield a useful set of data for this project. A method was required which would enable these participants to provide responses without the presence of the researcher. It was decided to adopt the DCT elicitation tool, which is described in the following section.

4.8 Origin and basic concept of DCTS

A written discourse completion task (DCT) consists of a short, written description of a situation involving a conversation between two people (the participant and a hypothetical interlocutor). The participant is asked to imagine what their responses would be in the given scenario, and to write them either freely or by filling in gaps and (Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Kasper and Rose, 2012). The first use of this instrument dates back to studies by Blum-Kulka, (1982; 1984), and researchers have continued to use the method since then, for example: Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986; Lee, 2006; Woodfield, 2008; Bataineh and Bataineh, 2006; Dalmau and Gotor, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Ogiermann, 2009; 2018).

4.8.1 Arguments against the use of DCT

The first, and perhaps most significant ,objection to the use of DCT as a data-gathering tool is that the data gathered is not authentic or natural because a DCT ‘requires participants not to conversationally interact, but to articulate what they believe would be appropriate responses’ (Golato, 2003,p.92). DCTs were also criticised for being unable to fully capture human interactions. Researchers have countered objections to DCT on the grounds of the problems of recording, accessibility and generalisability.

The first reason for using DCT is that natural data has to be recorded either by using a video-recording or by note-taking (Kasper 1991), as it is beyond human short-term memory to remember everything that was said (Ellis, 2011); therefore, there it is necessary to use equipment. If one of the research objectives is to capture facial reactions and gestures, then this type of research is needed. However, the current research is concerned only with how people use certain linguistic strategies in their interactions, regardless of their nonverbal communication such as facial expressions and gestures.

The second reason for choosing DCT is the limitations of observation methods. Some people are reluctant to be recorded or observed, or will participate with caution, which will limit the validity of the study and lead to questionable results. In any case, as stated above, there is no guarantee that a particular speech act will occur naturally. By contrast, completing a DCT online, as in the case of the current research, ensures that the required data, as authentic as possible, will be obtained.

The third reason is that the findings of DCTs can be generalised. A certain type of intercultural studies aims to ‘establish general, culture-specific patterns of language use’ and the results are regarded as valid if participants can consider their responses ‘as socially and culturally appropriate’ (Ogiermann 2017, p.233). If a large number of participants from the same background

agree on using a certain strategy or have the same reaction towards a question, it is widely accepted that this instrument can represent the generally accepted behaviour among a certain group of language speakers or a speech community. Eliciting people's meta-knowledge or perceptions does not invalidate DCT findings because participants describe what they think they would say if they found themselves in these situations (Schneider 2011, p.18). In the present study, the research questions relate to what people think and believe is normal usage, therefore this instrument is appropriate.

Another criticism of DCTs is that the tool cannot capture the length of and repetitive nature of utterances typically found in human interactions: there are discrepancies between the data from DCTs and natural spoken data (Golato, 2003; Beebe and Cummings, 1996, Martínez-Flor, 2019). It is time-consuming to capture all the vagaries of real speech: for the researcher, who has to analyse lengthy responses and for participants to engage in conversation fully and without fatigue.

The current study, however, was not focused on actual usage, but on the strategies used.

Compliment, specifically, is a one-way event; a full conversation is not needed for the participants to understand the immediate context and provide what they consider to be the appropriate speech act. In addition, researchers using DCTs report discrepancies in the length and directness of responses rather than in the actual strategies used. They do not, however, report a problem within the data itself in terms of validity or failure to meet the research goals. In the current study, the focus was not on the length of responses; however: the DCT was open-ended, enabling participants to write freely.

Another argument against DCTs pertains to the comparability of data. Hinkel (1997) in a study of Chinese and native speakers of English that compared the use of a multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ) and DCTs, different responses and frequencies of responses were statistically significant.

Rose and Ono (1995) also found that Japanese language speakers avoided direct strategy response

choices in MCQs compared to the DCTs. A counter to this criticism is that DCT is known to allow a comparison between people of different language backgrounds; it is the way that the DCT is designed that is crucial. In the present study, data was gathered from a great number of participants using a unified tool (DCT) and it has enabled some speculations about the social reasons and language abilities behind the participant's choice of responses to be made and results to be tested statistically to support the aims of the study.

Claims have also been made that filling in a DCT can feel like a test, and that the design and length of the questionnaire suggest things to the readers which could therefore bias the results (Jucker 2009, p. 1618). Blum Kulka, (1982) found that, when the hearer response is included in situations, the responses of non-native speakers differ and can be affected. This is why in this study full conversations were not included. The participants were instructed both at the beginning of the questionnaire and during the distribution of the questionnaire not to consider it as a test.

Highlighted on the cover sheet of the questionnaire was that any answer is accepted and considered valid. Response utterances were not given, so that participants would not derive clues from them as to what they should fill in the blanks between the lines. Instead, the DCT was left open-ended to avoid giving possible hints, clues or suggestions. This also has the advantage of potentially making the data easier to code or compare across different populations.

Another claim against the tool is that it neglects non-verbal features (e.g., gestures, posture, facial expressions) and paralinguistic elements (e.g., pitch, intonation). There are different approaches to pragmatics research and the importance of these features depends on the research purpose and context. The current study focuses on the illocutionary domain and its scope does not include examples of paralinguistic features *per se*, though some respondents did mention gestures.

One last argument against DCTs is that they generate unnatural utterances. As Jucker (2009, p.

1618) observes, 'some dialogues put the informants into roles with which they are unfamiliar'.

Generally speaking, most of the participants in the studies quoted in Jucker's research, as well as by those participants in the current study, replied naturally to the questions and did not report misunderstandings or request (to the best of the researcher's knowledge) any further clarifications. Moreover, the scenarios were adopted from studies in different contexts, as in Bluma-Kulka (1982), which was based on 8 different languages and considered the universality of situations. The scenarios of this study are, therefore, widely accepted and expected to occur naturally in everyday life.

The next section discusses the goals and advantages of the use of DCTs.

4.8.2 Advantages of DCTs

The first advantage of using a DCT is that, unlike other elicitation instruments, it was designed to investigate speech acts, and therefore it is one of the most influential instruments used in the field of intercultural pragmatics. The DCT tool was first constructed following Bluma-Kulka (1982, 1984) and Beebe and Takahashi (1989, p.109). A DCT can also be translated (Nelson et al. 2002, p. 167), for use with participants who speak different languages. Because of its design and functions, it allows for comparisons (Blum-Kulka, 1984, p.198).

The second advantage of using a DCT is that it can reveal variation of speech production in relation to context by showing how participants produce semantic formulae when they use speech acts in their interactions; it is therefore considered helpful in describing participants' pragma-linguistic abilities. According to Kasper (2000, p. 329), DCTs 'serve to realise communicative acts, and to examine the contextual factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate'.

The third advantage of using a DCT is that it has three features that make it effective. First, it is easy to use to obtain a large amount of naturalistic data in a relatively short time. It enables the

researcher to collect a large amount of data whilst controlling the social variables of each scenario. Collecting a large amount of comparable data is usually a difficult and lengthy task and DCT makes this task easier. This is particularly important for the researcher and the participants, as it makes both data collection and analysis less time- consuming for the researcher and makes it less likely that boredom and fatigue will affect the quality of participants' responses.

Another advantage of a DCT is that it can potentially increase the quality of responses. Beebe and Cummings (1996) compared the results obtained by natural *versus* DCT collection found both similarities and differences. The researchers endorsed the use of the DCT questionnaires based on their findings.

This is because the similarities found were in the use of semantic formulas and strategies with respect to social and psychological factors, even though the amount of data produced in natural situations was greater than the amount generated by a DCT. Despite some differences, the quality of the responses was not affected by the tool. One difference was that participants used fewer hedges in the DCT and avoided lengthy answers. According to Billmyer and Varghese (2000), length of responses does not seem to affect speech act realisation.

DCTs are also known to offer insights into the different ways in which a certain speech act is realised in a closely defined context (Schauer and Adolphs, 2006). Given the focus of the current project and the two contexts in which data was to be collected, namely, Saudi Arabia and United Kingdom, DCT allowed for comparable data to be collected easily, combining the two contexts in one study. Also, collecting data from native and non-native speakers was made easier through using a unified instrument (Decapua and Dunham, 2007).

Furthermore, DCT has a pedagogical benefit for language teachers and education policymakers because it can reveal general perceptions about appropriate speech production and elements of

speech and provides data that can facilitate language teaching and learning and enhance teaching materials. Specifically, language teachers in Saudi Arabia can utilise the results of this data to provide learners with generally accepted patterns of English language use.

The use of a DCT reduces the need to access research sites and buy research equipment. This is one of the advantages for both the researcher and the participants. Because the questionnaires can be distributed online via domains like Questionnaire Monkey, there is no need to set up a research site or obtain permission to use a facility. For the participants, it is better that they do not incur any expenses through travel, and they can access questionnaires at a time and location convenient for them.

Another advantage of this tool is that it is a safe instrument and produces valid data that stands alone or in combination with those obtained by another tool. According to Economidou-Kogetsidis, (2013, p.22), the data produced by DCTs is valid and reliable. There has not been any conclusive evidence 'showing that DCTs (written or oral) produce invalid data and that they are ineffective for reporting on the semantic or verbal formulas that speakers use or might use'.

4.8.3 The DCT design of this study

Research into pragmatic and applied linguistics often involves comparison of data to find out about the universal usage of language in context. A study by Blum-Kluka (1984) looked at request and apology speech acts and created situations where those speech acts could be tested in eight languages. The diversity of the responses was attributed to three variables: situational variability, cross-cultural viability and individual variability. For example, according to Blum-Kluka (1984), situational variability employs embodied social constraints in situations to find out systemic differences: 'requests addressed to superiors might tend, in a given culture, to be phrased in less direct terms than requests addressed to social inferiors, or vice versa' (p.197).

Cross-cultural variations show differences in how a particular cultural group might be less or more direct than others in responding to requests. Individual differences shed light on the individual variables such as age, gender and educational background, in terms of their influence on language use in general and speech acts in particular.

According to Blum-Kluka (1984), it is important to ensure the comparability of data sets by using a controlled elicitation procedure so as to be able to compare the data of individuals and the reasons for pragmatic failure, within the scope of applied linguistic domain. Pragmatic failure is often found in good speakers of second languages and it is associated with speech act realisation. Therefore, it is important to test and compare data to find out:

- I. To what extent some rules are easier to acquire by second language learners of the target language;
- II. Whether situational, cross-cultural or individual variations have an influential role

The first use of a controlled elicitation tool was by Blum-Kluka (1982), but it was developed for another project (1984); in the latter study the DCT format is described as follows:

Each discourse sequence presents a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, the social distance between the interlocutors and their status relative to each other, followed by an incomplete dialogue (p.198)

The main instrument of the present study was a DCT, in the form of an open-ended questionnaire. Two versions of DCT were used to capture compliment elicitation in six situations, and compliment responses in nine different situations. Two demographic information sections, both in English, were

created to reflect the two different language groups: Saudi students and native speakers of English.

In the instructions, for each situation, the notes clearly state that these situations are imagined as happening among people of different backgrounds whose only common language is English. Apart from the written instructions, Saudi KSA participants were instructed, by the researcher, to respond in English during the course of the researcher's field trip to Saudi Arabia.

Part two reports on the two pilot studies that were conducted prior to the main investigation and the changes that were made as a result.

4.9 Part Two

4.9.1 Initial pilot

The first pilot study was conducted in May 2017 with 6 Saudi learners of English whose mother tongue was Arabic. All participants were living in either the United States or the United Kingdom and were enrolled in universities either at undergraduate or postgraduate level. This preliminary pilot study was aimed at observing whether the situations of the DCTs were understandable. The pilot instrument (questionnaire) consisted of 15 situations, each asking the participants to respond to a compliment and give a compliment within the same situation. Participants were contacted by email and asked to click on a link to the questionnaire SurveyMonkey site to participate in the questionnaires. The participants were asked to give their feedback at the end of the questionnaire, and they made useful suggestions. The issues raised were as follows:

1. Most participants answered the first part correctly (give a compliment) but did not understand the second part (respond to a compliment). The cause is the phrase 'imagine the opposite' which was attached to the compliment response questions. It was meant to pave the way for them to give a compliment and imagine the situation in reverse by responding to the same compliment if given to them by someone else. This formulation appeared to be inappropriate and confusing.

2. Another issue noticed by the researcher is that the time spent to complete the questionnaire varied greatly between 7 minutes to 37 minutes, with the majority completing it in less than 20 minutes.
3. In some cases, reversing the situation was not appropriate. For example, a student was asked to reverse a situation that cannot be reversed. (e.g. Compliment the teacher on their performance). This had to be deleted from the compliment production situations but remained as one of compliment response situations.
4. The ethnicity of the participant ‘interlocutors’ needed to be identified because some respondents raised the question of whether these situations were happening with native speakers or non-native speakers of English.

These observations called for a change both in the design of the problematic situations and also the pre-completion instructions. There was also a need to change the number of the situations presented in the questionnaire as well dividing the questionnaire into two separate questionnaires. By complying with these suggestions, the second pilot aimed at avoiding participant fatigue and confusion.

4.9.2 Modified pilot

The second pilot was conducted in July 2017 with two Saudi English learners in English speaking countries. One participant was living in the United Kingdom, and one was living in the United States. Both participants had lived in English-speaking countries for 5 years, and both were enrolled in universities where the language of instruction is English. The new instrument consisted of two questionnaires, one focusing on making compliments and the other, on responding to compliments; this modification served the purpose of the questionnaires the best. Participants were required to click on two separate links in order to complete the two questionnaires separately.

This helped to minimise the confusion caused by answering the 15 situations on one page in the first pilot. As a result of that, the first modified questionnaire consisted of 9 situations where participants needed to respond to compliments, and the second modified questionnaire consisted of 6 situations where the participants were asked to give compliments.

The questionnaires were administered by email and completed by accessing the links on questionnaire monkey. The participants were asked to give their feedback at the end of the questionnaire, and they made useful suggestions.

The outcomes of this second pilot study were as follows:

1. Participants answered both questionnaires as they were supposed to be answered. No confusion was found in the second pilot.
2. The phrase 'Non-Arabic speakers' was added to each situation in the compliment production questionnaire but not in the compliment response questionnaire, so that the effect of the non-Arabic wording could be tested. However, a line was added in the introduction of both instructing the participants to respond in English, as these situations took place with non-Arabic speakers.
3. The time spent to complete each questionnaire seemed to be sufficient and appropriate.

The result of the second pilot seemed positive and promising; therefore, the version was used to finalise the tool to be sent to participants in the main study. The final version was officially administered in August 2017.

The next section discusses the content of the study in terms of the participant sample, situation topics and design principles used in the situations.

4.9.3 Participants

The study included native and non-native speakers of English : one group consisted of Saudi

learners of English in an immersion environment (Saudi UK); one group of Saudi learners of English were in a non-immersion environment (Saudi KSA) and the third group was a control group of British English native speakers (British NS) .

The sample of this study consisted of males and females, as follows:

1. Saudi English learners living in an English-speaking country (Saudi UK), 96 respondents in compliment production questionnaires and 69 respondents to the compliment response questionnaire. Total 165
2. Saudi English learners in Saudi Arabia (Saudi KSA): 100 respondents to compliment questionnaire, 113 subjects in compliment response questionnaire. Total 213
3. British English native speakers (British NS): 50 respondents to the compliment questionnaire and 35 to the compliment responses questionnaire Total 85

Although they were provided with links to two questionnaires, some participants did not follow through with both questionnaires; this explains why the number of respondents to the first questionnaire is not the same as to the second. Respondents' ages ranged from 18-50 years old with the average between 18-35. The first group of participants consisted of Saudi English learners who were living in an English-speaking country for their undergraduate or postgraduate studies. The second group of participants consisted of Saudi Arabic speakers who were either undergraduate or postgraduate students at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The third group of participants consisted of English native speakers who were either undergraduate or postgraduate students at Roehampton University in London, United Kingdom.

4.9.4 The questionnaire topics

The situations were created to fit the students' lifestyle and the participants' cultural backgrounds.

They were designed to provide an insight into the social variables that could affect the participants' responses, such as power and social distance. These variables are described in more detail (see theoretical background section 2.4.1 and the DCT design above). The director of study and co-supervisor reviewed the questionnaires. Changes to the situations were made following the recommendations and suggestions, before piloting the questionnaires.

4.9.5 Design principles

In designing the questionnaires, certain principles were considered so as to include a range of sociocultural variables, such as power and social distance and ranking of imposition. The influence of these sociocultural variables on responses to compliments has been shown in previous studies. Power seemed to affect the responses the most, followed by social distance. Social distance, power and ranking played different roles in determining how the different degrees of familiarity and history between interlocutors impacted their responses and strategy choices. These were considered alongside the nationality of the speaker by emphasising in the instructions as well in the specific situations, that the interactions are with non-native speakers of Arabic. The participants, then, were able to treat the interlocutors in each scenario as a native speaker of English or as a native speaker of another language (e.g. Spanish). Participants could have understood that this information was mentioned solely for the purpose of research and adjusted their answers cooperatively. After all, the elicitation research method is known for allowing cooperation between informant and researcher. If participants choose to adjust their answers in that way, they can only do so by activating their meta-pragmatic awareness, this is how their meta-pragmatic knowledge becomes visible in their response strategies (see section 2.15).

The next section describes how the study was designed, and introduces the social variables of

situations, the coding scheme and analysis procedure for compliment production first, then for compliment responses.

4.9.6 The compliment production situations

The questionnaire was constructed to investigate how British English and Saudi English learners give compliments in English (see appendix 3 and 5). The social variables discussed for each situation are as follows: [P]ower, [D]istance, and [R]anking of the imposition. In Table 4 below, the situations are evaluated in relation to P, D and R. The plus (+) indicates the likelihood for this variable to influence the strategies used in a provided situation, whereas the minus (-) indicates the unlikelihood of this variable to influence the strategies

Number	Situation	Hearer	Power	Distance	Ranking
1	Dinner- Ability	Friend	-	-	-
2	Mall- Appearance	Close friends	-	-	+ Low
3	Party- Possession	Stranger	-	+ High	+ High
4	Lunch at own's house - Possession	Colleague	+ Low	+ Moderate	+ High
5	Laptop bag - Possession	Classmate	-	+ Low	+ Low
6	Performance- Skill	Classmate	-	Low +	+ High

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF COMPLIMENT PRODUCTION QUESTIONNAIRE AND SOCIAL VARIABLES

1. Your (non-Arabic) friends have invited you over to dinner. You like the food, what would you say to your friend?

In this situation, because of the friendship, the power (-) distance (-) are low, and the imposition is low, but the topic is important culturally from the perspective of Saudi cultural values. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as a solidarity relationship and individuals are expected to perform their FTAs baldly on the record or use positive-politeness strategies. (Cruz, 2005). (see 2.4 and 2.5).

2. You see one of your (non-Arabic) close friends at the mall and you like her/ his new sunglasses; what would you say?

In this situation, there was no power (-), no distance (-) and ranking is low (+). However, because the relationship is close, there is a chance of imposition. The complimentee might be expected to give the sunglasses to the complimenter. The difference between this situation and the previous situation is the topic: complimenting on abilities is different from complimenting on possessions in some cultures. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this is another relationship of solidarity.

3. You are at a party and you see someone (non-Arabic) for the first time with a nice watch. What would you say to her/him about their watch?

In this situation, the power is (-) and distance is (+), and the ranking of the imposition is (+). The variables suggest this situation to be highly impositional.

4. One of your (non-Arabic) colleagues has invited you to have lunch at his/ her house for the first time, when you arrive, you like their house. What would you say to your colleague?

In this situation, the power is low (+), distance is low (+) and ranking is high (+). The relationship between colleagues is ambiguous. These colleagues might be in similar or different positions. The colleagues might be older or younger. In certain cultures, age has a power over the type of relationship. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this is a deference relationship, requiring more strategic face work than a solidarity relationship. What is more, the house situation is a high-risk topic in Saudi culture as possessing a beautiful house reflects success, wealth, and good taste and may induce envy and the evil eye.

5. You meet a (non-Arabic) classmate for the first time in class and like his or her laptop bag; what would you say to him or her?

In this situation, the variables are as follows: there is no power (-), distance is low (+) and ranking is low (+). Meeting someone for the first time inside a classroom is similar to the effect of meeting a stranger; therefore, this classmate might or might not have power over you. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as deference.

6. Your (non-Arabic) classmate just finished presenting his or her research project in class which you thought was really good; on their way back to their seat, what would you say to them about their presentation?

In this situation, the variables are as follows: the power is (-), distance is (+), and ranking is (+). The relationship is formal, but status is equal, and so power is not strong. However, while the relationship is equal, the degree of imposition is high because of the learning environment. Scollon and Scollon (2001) refer to this relationship as deference.

The next section introduces Yuan's taxonomy.

4.9.7 Yuan's (2002)'s taxonomy

In order to analyse compliment production data, a suitable coding scheme needed to be identified. Yuan's (2002) coding scheme is a widely known taxonomy in Eastern contexts. After consulting with supervisors, a decision was made that Yuan's (2002) coding serves the data the best and would be used as the main coding scheme for compliment production data as none of the studies in Saudi contexts have used this taxonomy before. According to Yuan, macro strategies can be categorised as unbound semantic formula, bound semantic formula, non-compliment or opt out. The bound semantic formula has 6 micro strategies as in discussed in figure 3 section 3.3. Yuan (2002) explained that an implicit compliment without an obvious positive semantic formula should not be considered a compliment. Therefore, any implicit compliment needs to co-occur with explicit compliments to differentiate between the core element of compliments and supportive motives.

This makes compliment easier to compare to other speech acts. Yuan explains, with respect to the differences, that explicit compliments as head and adjunct acts in a similar way as request speech acts (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). Although the function of requests and compliments are not the same, this division between bound and unbound contributes to simplifying the process of comparing compliments across different languages. It is worth mentioning that this applies to compliment production only, as compliment responses are different, and will be discussed next.

As the analysis progressed, not all the implicit compliments were found in the data of the current project. However, there were a large number of bound implicit compliments that did not co-occur within unbound explicit compliments, and therefore needed to be classified as irrelevant and not suitable for analysis.

In the table below, based on Yuan's taxonomy, each macro strategy can involve more than one micro strategy. For example, number 4 refers to instances where a combined strategy is used Explicit compliment + Explanation (4) and (5) refers to a combined strategy of Explicit compliment Information Question.

Strategy	Coding Number	Explicit vs. Implicit	Definition	Examples
Unbound	Explicit (1)	Explicit	Has at least one positive semantic carrier and can stand by itself	Nice Dress
Bound	Implicit (2)	Implicit	A general statement with or without a positive semantic carrier	Where did you buy your dress
Non-Compliment	Opt out (3)	N/A	No comment	I would say nothing
Bound	Explanation (4)		A statement	You must be happy about your haircut
Bound	Questions information (5)		Inquiry without an explicit compliment	Where did you buy it?
Bound	Future Reference (6)		Reference to skills or expectations	There should not be any prob for you to get a PhD in the fut
Bound	Contrast (7)		Comparison	Your child is not like mine
Bound	An advice (8)			Money is lifeless, we should s it when we have it (complime on house without mentioning house)
Bound	Request (9)		Implicit compliment - request	Lend me your dress for a cou days-without complimenting dress itself

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF MICRO-STRATEGIES OF COMPLIMENT PRODUCTION ACROSS SITUATIONS

As for the micro strategies within explicit and implicit compliments, the number of strategies used in each situation was limited. In order for the strategies to be statistically valid, there should be a cell of at least 5 uses per strategy. Even when this was the case, it was not found across groups and therefore did not allow for a test to be completed.

The next section describes the study design, the social variables of situations, the coding scheme and analysis procedure for compliment responses.

4.9.8 Compliment response situations

A second questionnaire was devised to investigate how British English and Saudi English learners respond to compliment situations in English (see appendix 4 and 6). As In table 4, in table 6 below, the plus (+) indicates the likelihood for this variable to influence the strategies used in a provided situation, whereas the minus (-) indicates the unlikelihood of this variable to influence the strategies; compliment response situations with their P, D, R evaluations from the perspective of Saudi cultural values are summarised in table 3 provided below:

Number	Situation	Hearer	Power	Distance	Ranking
1	Dinner-Ability	Friend	-	-	-
2	Mall-Appearance	Close friends	-	-	+Low
3	Party-Possession	Stranger	-	+ High	+ High
4	Lunch at own's house - Possession	Colleague	+Low	+Moderate	+ High
5	Laptop bag - Possession	Classmate	-	+ Moderate	+ Moderate
6	Performance- Skill	Teacher	+High	High+	+ High
7	Promotion - Abilities	Boss	+High	+High	+ High
8	High Grades at school - Abilities	Father	+High	-Low	+High
9	Presenting your research project- Abilities	Classmate	-Low	+Moderate	+High

TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES QUESTIONNAIRE AND SOCIAL VARIABLES

1. You invited your friends over to dinner. After they finish, one of them says to you: "the food was wonderful!" What would you say?

In this situation, because of the friendship, there is no power or (-) distance (-). It is a solidarity

relationship (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). We would therefore expect a routine response to such a compliment. However, food is culturally important, from the perspective of Saudi cultural values, and so social norms can influence this situation.

2. One of your close friends sees you at the mall and compliments you on your new sunglasses; she/he says: “Wow! You look really trendy in those sunglasses!” What would you say?

In this situation, the power (-), distance (-) and ranking is low (+). It is a solidarity relationship (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). However, because the relationship is close, there is a chance of imposition. The difference between this situation and the previous situation is the topic; complimenting on abilities is different from complimenting on possessions in some societies, including Saudi society. The complimentee may feel obliged to hand over the glasses to the complimenter.

3. You are at a party: you are introduced to someone you have not met before, who says, “I love your watch”. What would you say?

In this situation, the power is (-) and distance is (+). In Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as deferential. The ranking of the imposition is also (+). In Saudi culture, this is an impositional situation, as possessions can cause envy and induce the evil eye – and the complimentee might be expected to give the watch (an expensive item) to the complimenter. The strategies employed in the compliment response may reflect these considerations.

4. You invite your colleagues to have lunch at your house for the first time. When they arrive, one of them says to you: ‘your house is very nice!’ What would you say?

In this situation, the power is low (+), distance is moderately low (+) and ranking is high (+). The relationship among these people will vary. These colleagues might be in similar or different positions. The colleagues might be older or younger and in certain cultures, age has a power over the type of relationship. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as deferential. Complimenting someone on their house (an extremely valuable possession) is of high-

risk in Saudi culture, with the possibility of involving envy and the evil eye. The compliment response may reflect some of this.

5. Someone you meet for the first time in class says to you: your laptop bag seems really useful! What would you say?

In this situation, the variables are as follows: power (-), distance is moderate (+) and ranking is moderate (+). Meeting a classmate for the first time has a similar effect as when meeting a stranger: therefore, it might or might not have influence the respondent. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as deferential. Similar considerations as for the sunglasses, watch and for the house come in to play in Saudi culture but a laptop bag is less valuable and therefore less impositional in terms of envy and the evil eye. This lesser ranking may be reflected in the compliment response.

6. Your English teacher tells you that your performance is improving and that she/he is very satisfied with your work. What would you say?

In this situation, the variables are all strong because of the type of the formal hierarchical relationship. The power is high (+), distance is high (+), and ranking is high (+). Scollon and Scollon (2001) refer to this relationship as hierarchical and this results in The performance of FTAs without redressive actions or with positive-politeness strategies by the individual of higher status, and, on the other hand, in the need the individual of lower status feels to avoid FTAs, to perform them off the record or to compensate them by means of negative-politeness strategies (Cruz 2005, p.3). As the higher status individual is complimenting the lower status individual in this case, we would expect positive politeness in the giving of the compliment. The compliment response will reflect the strongly hierarchical system felt by the student in this situation in Saudi culture which venerates its teachers. Respect for teachers is enshrined in Islam.

7. Your boss tells you that she is giving you a promotion for all the hard work you have done. What would you say?

In this situation, the variables are all strong because the power is (+), distance is (+) and ranking is (+). According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as hierarchical and individuals are expected to perform as in situation 6.

8. Your father compliments you on your high grades at school, saying: "I'm proud of you, you are the role model to your sisters and brothers". What would you say?

In this situation, the variables are as follow: the power is (+), distance is (-), and ranking is (+).

Despite the power dynamic in the father-daughter/son relationship, distance is low because of the intimate relationship, and the imposition is possibly high in different cultures.

According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as hierarchical and individuals are expected to perform as in situations 6 or 7 but with an adjustment for the absence of social distance. Once again, respect for parents is enshrined in Islam and the compliment responses may be expected to reflect this.

9. You have just finished presenting your research project in class, on your way back to your seat, one of your classmates says to you: "you were great, well done!" What would you say?

In this situation, the variables are as follows: the power is (-), distance is low (+), and ranking is (+).

The relationship is formal, but the two individuals are equal in status, so there is no power but there is some social distance. Scollon and Scollon (2001) refer to this relationship as deferential.

The degree of imposition is high for Saudi students in learning environments because of the pressure on them to respect their teachers and parents and do well in class. The compliment responses may reflect this.

4.9.9 Holmes' taxonomy of compliment responses

The current study used Holmes' (1986) coding system to classify the compliment response strategies. According to Holmes, there are three macro strategies: accept, deflect and reject. Each of these macro strategies is further organised into sub-categories and then broken down into 11 micro strategies, as in the table below:

Macro level CRs	Micro level CRs	Examples
Accept	Appreciation token	"Thank you"; "Cheers"; "Yes";
	Agreeing utterance	"Yes, I really like it"; "I know"
	Downgrading	"It's nothing";
	Utterance	"I enjoyed doing it"
	Return compliment	"It's not bad" "You've got beautiful too"
Reject	Disagreeing utterance	"No, it was not good".
	Question accuracy	"Really?"
	Challenge sincerity	"Don't lie"; "come on"
Evade	Shift credit	"You're polite"; That's what friend are for
	Informative comment	"It was not hard"
	Request reassurance	"Really?"

TABLE 7: HOLMES' (1986) TAXONOMY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES (P.492)

Holmes (1986) also discusses responses that appear to be a combination of two compliments, for example, deflection or evading, followed by acceptance (p.494). Holmes insisted that attention be paid to the outcome of the overall meaning of the utterance because in some cases, the recipient accepted the compliment but tried to reduce the amount of credit. In such cases, the compliment's main function is as a contribution to the conversation, and therefore, Holmes argues, it is important to look for the discourse content when classifying these utterances. This was taken into consideration during analysis, to account for the existence of these combinations, which were best described within the qualitative analysis. For example, in the quantitative analysis, acceptance + downgrading was categorised under acceptance, but downgrading is a way to qualify the acceptance of credits and should be analysed in context. Holmes also supported this way of classification to

better explain the meaning or function of combined complimentary words (p.494). While the original taxonomy proposed by Holmes (1986) included only 11 types of responses, it was not enough to capture all the responses found in the data. New codes were added in the current study as the analysis progressed as some new codes kept emerging from the data and it was necessary to code them under a specific label. It was decided to group any response that included promises, invitations, questions and gestures under an ‘others’ code. The original taxonomy then was amended by the researcher to be more suitable to cover the new patterns, and included any additions found in the data, as in the table below:

Strategy	Coding	Definition	Examples
Others	Promises, cultural and religious references.	Any strategy used with cultural or religious references. Unclassified under Holmes	Thank you data. I will not let you down.
Acceptance token+ Agreement	Modified Acceptance	The use of agreement may have an overall effect on the contribution to the conversation	Thank you. I think that too
Acceptance token+downgrading	Modified Acceptance	Any words that are used to reduce the amount of credits	Thank you. I thought I did badly
Accepting token+ return compliment	Modified Acceptance	Acceptance tokens are combined with returning compliments using any words.	Thanks, I like your sunglasses, too
Acceptance token+ shift credits	Modified Acceptance	Acceptance but shifting the credit at the same time.	Thank you, if it was not for you I would not be here.
Acceptance token+ information comment	Modified Acceptance	Providing the information comment with acceptance makes it a contribution not an evasion. Sometimes, providing the information alone could be an act of evasion	Thank you. I bought it from Amazon.

TABLE 8: ADDITIONAL COMPLIMENT RESPONSE CODES

4.9.10 Coding functions

The first step was to organise the data into three spreadsheets, one for each group of participants.

Then a coding file was created which included the organisation of variables, demographic information, compliment production and compliment responses strategies and their assigned coding labels. The main task was to divide the data into explicit, implicit and opt out strategies for compliment production, but coding labels were also added for implicit sub-category responses, and any responses that did not fit into Yuan's main three categories; explicit, implicit, and opt out.

Yuan's coding also includes a set of implicit compliment sub-categories but not all of them occurred within the dataset of this research. In the event of non-compliment responses, responses were coded 0, indicating that they were irrelevant and not to be analysed.

All data coded and labelled 1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 were analysed. (see 4.9.7). The different types of compliment responses were divided into categories based on Holmes' (1986) taxonomy. In the event that the response did not fit into any of these categories, it was classified under 'others', which included any irrelevant responses or cultural related responses (see 4.9.9).

Three spreadsheets were created on EXCEL with labelled columns. Each group was assigned a separate sheet, as there was a large amount of data and this was found to be the best way to manage it. The data were nominal while demographical information was ordinal. Questionnaires consisted of 6 situations and 9 situations for compliment production and compliment responses, respectively, which contained open-ended and closed ended demographic questions. A description of the analysis procedure follows.

4.9.11 Compliment production and compliment responses analysis procedure: quantitative and qualitative

For compliment production and compliment responses the same analysis procedure was followed but separately; The first step involved creating tables on the statistical software package SPSS in order to classify and organise the data based on the chosen coding scheme to prepare them for analysis. Three spreadsheets were created per each group of participants. Tables were produced to show the collective number of times a strategy was used by each group. This was done first manually before transferring the numbers into tables to enable comparison across groups. The second step was organising the tables of macro strategies (explicit, implicit and opt out) for compliment production and (accept, deflect and reject) for compliment responses. This was followed by calculating the use of these strategies per group per situation (results by situation). This ensured that a significance test could be carried out using a chi-square online calculator to test the macro strategy significance difference across groups. The calculator was used to test the difference between Saudi groups at a significance level of (0.05), and across the three groups as well.

The last step was to look at individual responses using NVivo analysis. A general search was made on all imported files to look for the most frequently occurring words and their related words.

Another investigation was carried out to find the most frequently used words per situation. The third search was to look for specific word frequencies as per the results of the quantitative analysis. For example, a search for the word 'promise' as in situation 8, showed many compliment responses containing uncategorised micro strategies under Holmes' (1986) classification. Therefore, all responses containing 'promises' were categorised under 'others' category. The same procedure was followed with other words to look for any interesting findings from the quantitative analysis. After calculating the number of frequently used words for each situation and for each group, themes were created bearing in mind the different frameworks.

The themes were used mainly to help to explain and illustrate some of the ways in which the

different groups answered the DCT, with reference to the politeness model, intercultural communication, and the rapport management model, in terms of the independent variables of this study. The next section gives a description of analysis.

4.9.12 Procedure

For each situation, a table was created to show the frequency of the three macro strategies across groups. The table presented raw numbers and normalised percentages. This was created using the following equation: the number of times a strategy was used by a group was divided by the number of participants and multiplied by 100 = the rate this strategy was used by that group in that situation.

Compliment production: As the number of participants in the two Saudi groups was almost the same (100 Saudi KSA and 96 Saudi UK), the groups were considered to be well-balanced. The British NS group consisted of 50 participants, however. Numbers were normalised to take account of this. Compliment responses: the numbers were normalised as well (113 Saudi KSA, 69 Saudi UK and 35 British NS).

4.10 Meta-pragmatic awareness and DCTs

The DCT indirectly provides evidence showing that the participants worked through their answers using their meta-pragmatic awareness. With regard to the DCT used in this project, the selection of appropriate responses as mentioned before is helpful to elicit meta-pragmatic awareness because it does not necessarily reflect what might be said in real life. DCT is one of the well-known research methods for discovering social norms and expected behaviour in certain situations. The social characteristics of the imagined addressee might have an impact on how participants choose to respond to compliments.

In data elicitation methods such as discourse completion tasks or pragmatic judgement tasks, the sociopragmatic domain tends to be operationalised primarily in terms of whether learners can make correct linguistic selection based on assumptions about interpersonal categories such as ‘professor’ or ‘friend’, the kind of social distance or power distance that can be expected in an interaction with

a person from that category, and then how these variables would determine appropriate selection (McConachy and Spencer-Oatey 2019, p.4). McConachy (2019) discussed the cultural assumptions drawn from the L1 and L2 that become visible when interpreting the pragmatic behaviour of L2 learners. These assumptions are not random but can represent the mechanism of the appropriate language as seen and used by the native speakers of a certain language (Felix- Brasdefer, 2007).

Although the nationality of the imagined speaker was not mentioned in the situations of the current project nor whether he/she was a native speaker of English or not, the instructions did mention that the speaker does not speak Arabic. This may have had a significant impact on selected compliment responses strategies by respondents. Because these situations were imaginary and required respondents to imagine what they would do, situation 8 (father-participant) in the compliment response questionnaires was also answered in English when in an authentic situation, they would be unlikely to use their L2 to communicate with their parents. Yet the participants followed the instructions and responded in English. This shows that their meta-pragmatics awareness was active during the process of responding to the questionnaires and that the instructions were well-put and clear. This provided additional evidence for research questions that the despite the term ‘friend’ or ‘close friend’ being used, and situations did not mention whether the speaker was a native or non-native speaker of English. The participants may have adjusted their responses accordingly, but that did not hinder the quality of responses, because evidence of pragmatic transfer, cultural references, and differences between the two Saudi groups (immersion vs. non-immersion), as well as their differences or similarities from British native speaker of English were established. Observations regarding the data analysis are presented next.

4.11 Overall data observations

In the dataset, some Saudi KSA participants made English spelling mistakes and some used Arabic words or dots. Their responses were reported as appeared in the data with spelling corrections in square brackets. This observation is further discussed in the discussion chapter in light of their English level, if that has any connections with the strategies used. In addition, a few students wrote Arabic words or phrases to respond to the questionnaire, although the instructions clearly stated that the hearers did not understand Arabic. The phrases were written in Arabic language as an add-on to their responses or to further explain their responses in English. Such observations were not found in a large quantity.

4.12 Quantitative analysis observations

While categorising the macro strategies into micro strategies, some strategies were found to be used more than others. A decision then was made to categorise the micro strategies, to include only the top three used strategies because some micro categories contained less observations than 10 per cell, which was statistically insufficient to analyse. Chi-square test is supposed to observe any assumption that is more than 5: some categories showed 5 observations or less, which were not invalid but unmeasurable. That is also why it did not accept to observe 0 as a value. When 0 occurred, number 1 was inserted where needed, to allow a chi-square test to be performed. This was found in different situations where one group used the strategy more than others, but these small modifications did not affect the overall result.

4.13 Qualitative analysis observations

The analysis of the data was in the form of a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis was a complementary procedure which allowed to find any differences across groups, to interpret the data qualitatively from various perspectives. Apart from that, the

researcher's own knowledge and background of Saudi culture helped to make certain inferences based on personal intuitions, to interpret the data in the qualitative analysis. Therefore, the researcher's interpretation is subjective because it is informed by her knowledge of the Saudi community as an insider. However, this does not hinder the fact that the qualitative analysis was based on supportive evidence from various sources. While the researcher's subjective role helped to establish a base, it does not prevent the evidence found in the data from answering the research questions of the project.

4.14 Conclusion

The chapter started by providing details on linguistics research methods, specifically, methods used in compliment research. Then it presented the chosen tool of the project, the DCT, and explained the challenges and advantages of the method. Then, the chapter provided details on the design of the method, questionnaire situations, design principles and social variables of the compliment production and compliment response questionnaires. The chapter next reported the results of the pilot studies carried out and the adjustments made to the study as a result. The analytic procedure for both questionnaires, including the coding, were described. Finally, some observations about the process were made, including meta-pragmatic awareness and quantitative and qualitative analysis. The next chapter will discuss the results of the compliment production questionnaire, following the procedure described in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Results and Discussion: Compliment Production

5.1 Introduction

The results chapter aims to confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses and expectations outlined in the research questions. The Saudi UK group, being in an immersion environment, is predicted to give compliments differently compared to their Saudi KSA peers. The chapter also seeks to investigate any evidence of assimilation that can be found among the Saudi UK respondents when compared to the British NS.

This chapter is divided into two parts: Part one starts by presenting the results of the comparison of the macro strategies used in compliment production (explicit, implicit and opt out) by the three groups. This is followed by detailed results of the discourse completion tasks for the six situations. Then, it is followed by qualitative data in the form of supporting examples.

Part two presents the six themes that emerged from the dataset as a result of conducting qualitative analysis on the data, the themes are discussed based on politeness theory and Leech's principles of politeness.

Qualitative comparisons are drawn between the groups on the impact of social distance, power and topic variables, and how the responses are affected by social factors.

Spellings mistakes within data are corrected in square brackets but grammar mistakes and unusual uses of English (L1 interference or literal translations) are not, unless they seriously impede understanding

5.2 Part One

A table was created to group the macro-strategies statistical results of compliment production. The

data from the Saudi KSA group was compared with data from the Saudi UK group .Then, the data from Saudi KSA was compared with the British NS, data from Saudi UK was compared with the British NS, and finally, data across the three groups was also compared. This was done in order to identify differences or similarities and to locate any changes between the two Saudi groups. In the table showing the chi-square test results below, S stands for ‘significant’ and NS stands for ‘Not significant’.

Macro Strategies	Saudi KSA- Saudi UK	Saudi KSA-British NS	Saudi UK- British NS	Across 3 group
Situation 1 1. Explicit 2. Implicit 3. Opt-out	S	NS	NS	NS
Situation 2 1. Explicit 2. Implicit 3. Opt-out	NS	NS	NS	NS
Situation 3 1. Explicit 2. Implicit 3. Opt-out	S	S	S	S
Situation 4 1. Explicit 2. Implicit 3. Opt-out	NS	NS	NS	NS
Situation 5 1. Explicit 2. Implicit 3. Opt-out	S	NS	NS	NS
Situation 6 1. Explicit 2. Implicit 3. Opt-out	NS	NS	NS	NS

TABLE 9: SUMMARY OF COMPLIMENT PRODUCTION MACRO-STRATEGIES STATISTICAL RESULTS

The table above shows that situation 3 was significant at all levels and across groups. Situations 1 and 5 were significant between Saudi UK and Saudi KSA. Situation 1 and 5 were not significant

between Saudi UK and British Natives. These results will be discussed next in 5.2.1

The percentage does not always add up to 100 in some situations because there were some irrelevant uncategorised responses. (see 4.9.7)

5.2.1 Situation 1

Your (non-Arabic) friends invited you over to dinner. You like the food. What would you say to your friends?

Groups	Explicit	Implicit	Opt-out
Saudi KSA	81	11	0
	81%	11%	0%
Saudi UK	70	24	1
	72.9%	25%	1.4%
British NS	37	10	0
	74%	20%	0%

TABLE 10: MACRO-STRATEGIES USE IN SITUATION 1

In this situation, the majority of the participants used explicit compliments, followed by implicit compliments. Of the three groups, the Saudi KSA used explicit compliments the most at 81%, their UK peers at 72.9% and British NS at 74%.

Implicit compliments were used in 11% of cases by the Saudi KSA group, 25% by the Saudi UK group and 20% by native speakers. There was only 1.4% opt out in Saudi UK data and none in the other two groups.

Chi-square tests showed no significant differences across groups in terms of explicit and implicit compliment production strategy use. The p-value was. 059481. The result was not significant at $p < .05$. The chi-square test between the two Saudi groups showed that the result was significant in

terms of their use of explicit and implicit compliment production strategies. The p-value was .017868. The result was significant at $p < .05$. Comparing the Saudi KSA with the British NS group showed a p-value of .146639. The result was not significant at $p < .05$. The comparison between the Saudi UK and British NS group showed the p-value was .577643. The result was not significant at $p < .05$.

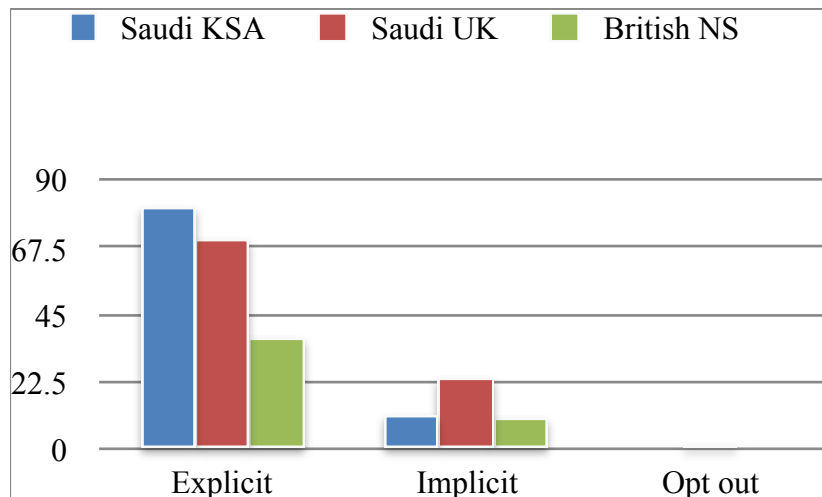


FIGURE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 1

The figure shows that Saudi KSA favoured explicit compliments. The Saudi UK and the British NS groups used explicit compliments equally, while the Saudi UK group favoured implicit compliments more than the other two groups. The situation has a symmetrical relationship. There was no power, no social distance between friends, and the topic of the compliment was food, which suggests a lack of imposition.

The first possible variable that could have affected the results of the situation and caused them to be significant, is how friendship is viewed by the two Saudi groups. Another possible explanation is that the concept of hospitality and ability to cook good food has changed over time so that mastering hospitality, one of which is cooking meals and gathering friends, is no longer such a fundamental part of Saudi tradition. It may be that the Saudi UK group developed behaviour similar to the British NS group due to being in an immersion environment.

On a micro level, the Saudi KSA and British NS groups used strategy 5 (Information Question) the most while the Saudi UK group favoured strategy 4 (Explanation). Saudi KSA employed strategy 5 seven times and British NS used it six times. The Saudi UK group employed the strategy five times. In this situation, there were a number of cultural references and irrelevant responses. Below are examples taken from the responses to Situation 1 across the groups:

One Saudi KSA respondent showed awareness that they were speaking to a non-Arabic friend, saying:

(1) The food was really delicious. is it a traditional food in u r country? (Saudi KSA.no.2)

Another comment that contained a cultural reference by connecting food and culture was:

(2) Introduce me to more delicious food from your culture!! (Saudi KSA.no.46)

Another response was to show politeness by complimenting the one who had made the food:

(3) the food was wonderful say that to the one who made please (Saudi KSA.no.51).

Some respondents used friendly words to express enthusiasm such as:

(4)'wow man this food is so good' (Saudi KSA.no.9).

One respondent expressed enthusiasm by indicating that they would be a regular visitor, because of the delicious food:

(5) I want to go to your house every day and eat dinner (Saudi KSA.no.27).

In another example, the respondent expresses enthusiasm as a way to enhance rapport:

(6) oh my god, you cooked the kind of food what i like thank you honey (Saudi KSA.no.88);

(7)the best meal has never been tasted befor (Saudi KSA.no.89). [before] One intensified and

exaggerated their happiness, saying:

(7)'ahhh i have never eaten food tasted so good ilke this in my whole life! swear to god: (Saudi KSA.no.72) [like].

A female respondent commented on the food by praising the ability to cook well, not only the taste of food:

(8) Thank you for inviting me, the dinner was really great, well done (Saudi KSA.no.80).

Examples from the British NS group showed a tendency towards using explicit compliments more than implicit ones, although with enthusiasm and intensifying the acts. For example:

(9) That was nice (multiple times) (British NS.no.42).

(10) This is delicious. Thanks a million (British NS.no.18)

(11)This is really great. OR This is really tasty OR This [inset food type] is amazing OR Wow, this is really good etc. (British NS.no.26)

Some British NS respondents requested the recipes as an indication of their appreciation of the food:

(11) Lovely food! Can I have the recipe? (British NS.no.13)

(12) The food is great! What did you put in this for that flavour? (British NS.no.23)

(13) mmm, this food is really tasty 'friend's name', thank you! How did you make it? (British NS.no.24)

(14)

Some showed enthusiasm as well as asking for the recipe:

(15)Yummmmmm, this is delicious! May I please have the recipe (British NS.no.30) or found an opportunity to start phatic talk as in:

(16) That was really nice thank you for dinner! Do you cook often? (British NS.no.35).

While respondents in the Saudi UK group also referred to culture like their Saudi KSA peers, they also used implicit responses in line with the British NS group as in the examples below:

(17) Is this pork? If not. Give me the recipe! (Saudi UK.no.65).

Although the example above was categorised as irrelevant to this research, it contained a cultural

reference so is included here.

Other examples of food being referred to as an expression of culture were found in Saudi UK data:

(18) Thank you for the invitation, I am happy to try food from different culture, I enjoy the dinner and the food was delicious (Saudi UK.no.85) [invitation; different]

(19) Thank you for the invitation and the delicious food I really like it. Next time I should let you try the Saudi dishes :) (Saudi UK.no.31).

(19) I'm really happy to try food from different countries and culture, and (say my opinion about the food) (Saudi UK.no.81) [countries]

Some chose different ways to express their compliments:

(20) The food is spot on (Saudi UK.no.7).

(21) Thank you for your great hospitality! (Saudi UK.no.47)

The respondent asked who had made the food or/and complimented the ability to cook:

(22) Yummy the food is great who made it? (Saudi UK.no. 23)

(23) That was awesome Didn't know you could cook! (Saudi UK.no.79)

The respondent showed enthusiasm and asked for the recipes in a similar way to British native speakers:

(24) Please send me the recipe. It's very delicious (Saudi UK.no.29)

(25) Super delicious food! How do you make the cake e.g.! (Saudi UK.no.28)

(26) This meal is absolutely delicious! I would love to have the recipe (Saudi UK no.83).

Another response was to reciprocate the invitation or propose further dinner dates, somehow in a similar way to some of the responses from the Saudi KSA group:

(27) The dinner was really Delicious, I like it. Thank you for this invitation I will invite you to lunch next time. (Saudi UK no.69)

(28) The food was amazing guys let's gather up again in here (Saudi UK.no.68).

The opportunity to freely express their thoughts using the open-ended DCT, produced some interesting responses that were not direct compliments:

(29) No. Never been invited. If I, I would say: It's very delicious. Thanks a lot. (Saudi UK no.36)

In general, Saudi KSA and Saudi UK linked food to culture, perhaps because they understood that the situation involves with a non-Arabic speaker, which presumably indicates different cultures.

Saudi KSA used explicit compliments to enhance rapport more than their UK peers. British NS tended to show enthusiasm and intensify the compliments on food. Saudi UK and British NS asked for the recipes as a part of their compliments more than Saudi KSA

5.2.2 Situation 2

You see one of your (non-Arabic) close friends at the mall and you like her/ his new sunglasses; what would you say?

Groups	Explicit	Implicit	Opt-out
Saudi KSA	77	22	0
	77%	22%	0%
Saudi UK	75	15	2
	78%	15.6%	2%
British NS	36	14	0
	72%	28%	0%

TABLE 11: MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 2

In this situation, the majority of the participants used explicit compliments, followed by implicit compliments. 77%, of the compliments used by the Saudi KSA group were explicit, almost the same as their UK peers, at 78% and British NS at 72%. 22% of the Saudi KSA responses involved implicit compliments compared to 15.6% by Saudi UK and 28% by the British NS group. There was a 2% opt-out in Saudi UK data.

The chi-square test showed no significant differences across groups in terms of their explicit and implicit compliment production strategy use. The p-value was .281088. The result was not significant at $p < .05$. The chi-square test between the two Saudi groups showed that the p-value was .336384. The result was not significant at $p < .05$. Comparing British NS and Saudi UK showed the p-value was .112852. The result was not significant at $p < .05$. Comparing British NS and Saudi KSA showed the p-value was .436583. The result was not significant at $p < .0$

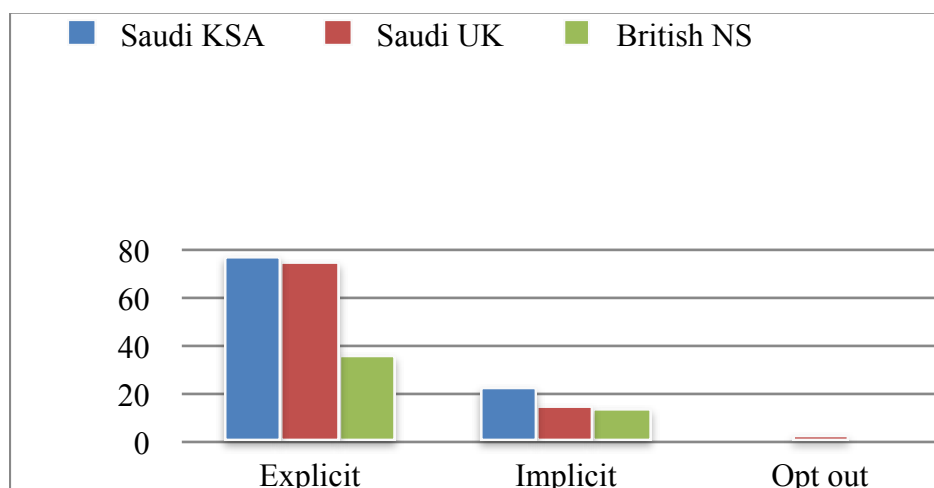


FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 2

The figure shows that the Saudi group favoured explicit compliments the most while the British NS group used explicit compliments the least in this situation, but these differences are not statistically significant so could be attributed to chance.

The situation focuses on appearance and involves a symmetrical relationship. There is no power or social distance between close friends and the topic of the compliment, appearance connected with wearing nice or trendy sunglasses, normally constitutes a lack of imposition. Complimenting in this case can be either explicit or implicit for those who do not consider the topic to be sensitive among close friends in a context such as a mall, which is a natural setting for such a compliment to occur between friends. Apart from explicit compliments, at a micro level, all groups used strategy 5 (Information Question) the most. The Saudi KSA group employed the strategy 15 times, the Saudi UK group employed the strategy 12 times and the British NS group used it 11 times. Examples of responses are shown below:

Some friendly responses, given the context:

- (30) Hey there long time no see, wow nice sunglasses how much did you get them for (Saudi KSA.no.1).

(31) hi(the name of my friend) , i like your sunglasses (Saudi KSA .no.20).

(32)*nice glasses, fool (Saudi KSA.no.6). Fool is a literal translation from Arabic, it means no offence in general*

In some cases, the compliment included a reason:

(33) I love your new sunglasses it makes you so cool (Saudi KSA.no.17).

(34) This sunglasses is change your face to the best (Saudi KSA.no.25).

(35)Your look wit new sunglasses is dope (Saudi KSA.no.50). *Dope is a slang word found on the internet meaning ‘ very good’*

One respondent intensified the compliment:

(36) Wow, nice sunglasses. Looks like they were made for you (Saudi KSA.no.75).

Some used literal translations of Arabic:

(37) Damn, these glasses are sick! (Saudi KSA.no.45).

(38) You always beatiful with sunglasses or without (Saudi KSA.no.92) [beautiful]

Respondents referred to culture, which reflects their awareness that these conversations are not with Arabic speakers:

(39) WOW!! are those from (their hometown)? (Saudi KSA.no.46).

Compliments were exaggerated, as in:

(40) omg u look nice with these sunglasses [shockingly] (Saudi KSA.no.57). *Emphasis added by respondent*

(41) girl what are those!!! :D looks fire on you (Saudi KSA.no.72).

Some engaged in phatic talk as in:

(42)wow you look very amazing in this sunglasses, don't return it back ,I'll buy one do you mind?
(Saudi KSA no. 86).

(43) i like your sunglasses can i borrow it for one week ... i'm just kidding (Saudi KSA.no.94).

Responses from the British NS group varied as well, with a focus on getting information:

(44) I really like your sunglasses. Where did you get them from. How much did they cost? (British NS.no.5).

(45) Cool sunglasses. Where did you get them? (British NS.no.12).

(46) Cute sunglasses! Where are they from? (British NS.no.48).

(47) I like your sunglasses, are they new? (British NS.no.19)

The respondents used a friendly way to compliment a close friend, but without exaggeration:

(48) Dude, I dig your shades, really cool (British NS.no.36).

(49) I would say hello and see how they were, then compliment them on their glasses (British NS.no.3).

Some explained why they liked the sunglasses:

(50) Super glasses, they really suit you (British NS.no.6).

(51) I love your sunglasses, they really suit you (British NS.no.11).

(52) Hey, those sunglasses look really cool on you! (British NS.no.20)

Responses from the Saudi UK group overlapped with previous examples but seemed to favour explicit compliments in this context:

(53) Wow nice glasses (Saudi UK no.4)

Sometimes, the compliment was expanded with further explanation:

(54) Your sunglasses is fitting you (Saudi UK no.8)

(55) love your glasses! It suites you very much (Saudi UK.no.12) [suits]

(56) I like your glasses they suite you and look great for your face (Saudi UK.no.23) [suit].

(57) Nice sunglasses. They fit you perfectly. good choice (Saudi UK.no.31).

Some were friendly more than flattery in their expressions

(58)I love your shades! They suit your beautiful face. The only problem is that they are hiding your magical eyes! (Saudi UK.no.47). *This is also an Arab way of complimenting upon seeing someone with shades. It is a ritualist phrase among other ready-made phrases.*

Saudi UK respondents used more sophisticated English compared to the Saudi KSA group in their various compliments, as in:

(59) Those are nice shades! "Sunglasses" where did you buy them from? (Saudi UK no..65)

(60) What a nice sunglasse. It's made for you (Saudi UK.no.66) [sunglasses].

(61) Your Sunglasses looks pretty awesome, As if it's made for you (Saudi UK.no.69).

(62) Wow, i like your glasses, it is so cute and perfectly fit to your face (Saudi UK.no.85).

(63) I like your shades, they are stunning! (Saudi UK no..74).

(64) I like your eyeglasses, so elegant (Saudi UK.no.87).

Some used informal information questions about the shop where the glasses were bought, with some exaggeration:

(65) Awesome sunglasses mate! Where did you get them from? (Saudi UK.no.83)

(66)Oh your sunglasses are beautiful, from where did you get them And if I liked the sunglasses on her only but they wouldnt suit myself or my style, I would tell her that they look very beautiful on her (Saudi UK .no.89) [Would not. Beautiful]

In general, the Saudi UK group used more sophisticated expressions compared to the Saudi KSA group to deliver their compliments, and Saudi KSA used informal ways to intensify their compliment to their close friends. Saudi UK respondents did not intensify or exaggerate as much as their Saudi KSA peers. British speakers enquired about the items as in Situation 1 but did not seem

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to be affected by the type of relationship. Responses in all groups included specific reasons behind the compliments.

5.2.3 Situation 3

You are at a party and you see someone (non-Arabic) for the first time with a nice watch.

What would you say to her/him about their watch?

Groups	Explicit	Implicit	Opt- out
Saudi KSA	71	21	6
	71%	21%	6%
Saudi UK	65	5	24
	67.7%	5.2%	25%
British NS	24	17	7
	48%	34%	14%

TABLE 12: MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 3

In this situation, the Saudi KSA group used explicit compliments the most at 71%, their UK peers used them 67.7% of the time and British NS, 48% of the time. 21% of compliments used by the Saudi KSA group were implicit, while 5.2% of compliments provided by the Saudi UK group were implicit and 34% of compliments by native speakers. Opt-outs were 6% for the Saudi KSA group, 25% for the Saudi UK group and 14% for the British NS group.

The chi-square test showed a significant difference across the groups in terms of their explicit and implicit and opt out compliment production strategy use. The p-value was < 0.00001 . The result was significant at $p < .05$. Comparing the two Saudi groups, differences were significant at $p < .05$. The p-value was .00003. Comparing Saudi KSA with British NS, the result was also significant at p

< .05. The p-value was .023425. Finally, comparing Saudi UK with British NS showed that the result was significant as well at $p < .05$. The p-value was .000015.

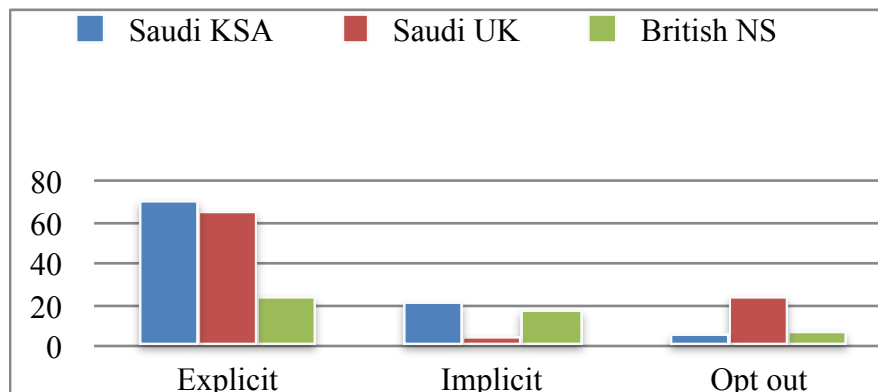


FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 3

The results were mixed as shown in the figure above: Saudi KSA favoured explicit compliment strategy the most, British NS favoured implicit compliments strategy the most, and Saudi UK favoured the opt out strategy the most. With that being said, the groups used all strategies but at different rates. On a micro level, the Saudi KSA and British NS group used strategy 5 (question information) while Saudi UK did not use it at all. The Saudi KSA group used it 19 times and British NS, 16 times. The situation involves a symmetrical relationship, in that there was no power and there is a social distance between strangers, which indicates a possible imposition. The topic of the situation was a compliment on a watch in a party context. It seems that the relationship was treated differently by the three groups. The topic of the compliments (complimenting on possessions) is normally a sensitive topic in the Saudi context.

The qualitative analysis shows various types of responses:

The Saudi KSA group asked about the watch or complimented the watch in an informal way because of the context:

(67) Nice you rich idiot (Saudi KSA.no.6). *As it is unlikely to call a stranger 'idiot', this can be a mock compliment in Arabic.*

(68) Man i love your watch it's beautiful (Saudi KSA.no.9).

(69) What was the price of this watch it looks really fancy' (Saudi KSA.no.1).

(70) They bro nice watch i like it where can i buy it? (Saudi KSA.no.21).

(71) I love your watch where did you get it from?' (Saudi KSA.no.17).

Some respondents preferred to enquire about the watch in different way, perhaps because they were interested or perhaps because of wanting to start a phatic talk:

(72) Your watch is beautiful, is it swiss made? (Saudi KSA.no.84) [Swiss].

(73)Hi i am looking for new watch and i like your can you tell me where i can find it if you don't
mide (Saudi KSA.no.94) [Mind].

(74) Nice watch.is it vintage? (Saudi KSA.no.56)

(75) Hello i really couldn't help but stare at your watch its design is really beautiful (Saudi KSA.no.28).

By contrast, others stated that they would not interact with a stranger and produced: Opt-out' responses

(76) Nothing because I don't even know him (Saudi KSA.no.14).

(77) Actually i wont talk to him (Saudi KSA.no.38). [will not]

(78) I'd not comment on someone i just met (Saudi KSA.no.46).

(79) I'm not going to say anything (Saudi KSA.no.72).

(80) Nothing because am not social (Saudi KSA.no.2).

Since it is a supposedly expensive possession, one respondent commented using a protective word to steer away the evil eye:

(81) Your have a nice watch *mashallah*. (Saudi KSA.no.96).

British NS respondents varied their responses as well, preferring implicit compliments, for example:

(82) Hey, that's a nice watch, where did you get it (British NS.no.9).

(83) 'Wow, great watch – do you mind me asking where you got it? (British NS.no.15).

(84) Wow (maybe!) Where did you get that? (British NS.no.50).

Those who preferred not to interact, explained that it would be rude or uncomfortable:

(85) Nothing, it would be too forward and rude (British NS.no.6).

(86) If it's someone I don't know I probably would not comment (British NS.no.27).

(87) I'm not sure I would say anything, I don't know them (British NS.no.11).

Others tried to use a redressive action to ask the question or to start phatic talk, because of the context:

(88) Hello, I can't help noticing your gorgeous watch. I've been looking for something like that for my husband (British NS.no.22). [Been]

(89) Hey, just wanted to come over and say your watch is really nice. Where did you get it? (British NS.no.23).

(90) Depends on the watch if it was really OTT. I might say 'bloody hell look at that, that is amazing! Where did you get that from? (British NS.no.26).

(91) I just noticed the watch you're wearing. It looks really nice on you. (British NS.no.20).

(92) Wow, great watch - do you mind me asking where you got it? (British NS.no.15).

(93) Sorry if this is weird, but that watch is really cool (British NS.no.28).

(94) Sorry, can I just ask where you got your watch from as it's really nice? (British NS.no.36).

(95) Hi, enjoying the party? Nice watch you got there (British NS.no.38).

Some explained that they would start with small talk before making the compliment:

(96) I like your watch by the way (after some small talk) (British NS.no.42).

Explicit compliments were made in a friendly way:

(97) What a lovely watch! (British NS.no.7)

(98) I really like your watch, by the way. (British NS.no.31)

There were more opt out examples in the Saudi UK group:

(99) Well it depends I may say nothing but if I have to say smth Nice watch you have (Saudi UK.no.4) [Something].

More different ways of opting out:

(100) Nothing! I wouldn't make such move! (Saudi UK.no.20).

(101) I wouldn't say anything because I don't know them before (Saudi UK.no.34).

(102) 'Probably nothing but if I have to, I would say your watch looks nice and I would ask him/her about the brand and the watch features (Saudi UK.no.42).

(103) I wouldn't complement something with someone I don't know well in a party (Saudi UK.no.56). [compliment]

(104) I don't say anything because I don't know the person (Saudi UK.no.86) [Do not].

(105) I won't ask anyone I don't know about something he/she wearing (Saudi UK.no.76) [will not, Do not].

Some used redressive actions to enquire about the watch or to start phatic talk:

(106) If that person seems easy to talk to, I would say Hi, how are you my name is Sarah and I really liked your watch. but in. Most cases I wouldn't talk to someone just because I like what they are wearing (Saudi UK.no.89) [Someone].

(107) By the way, your watch is awesome mate! (Saudi UK.no.83).

(108) Lovely watch ... I guess ... (Saudi UK.no.79).

(109) Hi, my name is _____. I'm from _____. Nice watch you got there (Saudi UK.no.57).

(110) Excuse me! Do you have the time? That's a very good looking watch mate! Even though I'm not into watches?? (Saudi UK.no.65).

(111) I like your watch, by the way I'm a watches lover (Saudi UK.no.43).

Some made explicit compliments:

(112) You have a nice watch (Saudi UK.no.1).

(113) Nice watch by the way (Saudi UK.no.11

(114) I like your watch!’ (Saudi UK.no. 26).

Respondents explained why they liked the watch:

(115) I like your watch! It looks super fancy! (Saudi UK.no.28).

(116) You watch looks perfect on you suites you so much! (Saudi UK no..76).

The difference across the groups seems to occur in whether they would give the compliment in the first place or not. In the choice of compliment, the Saudi KSA and British NS tended to enquire about the watch whereas respondents in the Saudi UK group expressed their admiration without seeking information. This was evident in their choice of micro strategies, where Saudi KSA and British NS shared the use of strategy 5. All groups showed a tendency to start phatic talk at some point before complimenting a stranger.

5.2.4 Situation 4

One of your (non-Arabic) colleagues invited you to have lunch at his/ her house for the first time. When you arrive, you like their house. What would you say to your colleague?

Groups	Explicit	Implicit	Opt-out
Saudi KSA	83	13	2
	83%	13%	2%
Saudi UK	68	18	1
	70.8%	18.7%	1%
British NS	41	8	0
	82%	16%	0%

TABLE 13: MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 4

In this situation, the majority of the participants used explicit compliments followed by implicit

compliments. Saudi KSA used explicit compliments the most, at 83% while 70.8% of their UK peers and 82% of the British NS group used explicit compliments. Implicit compliments were used by 13% of Saudi KSA, 18.7% of Saudi UK and 16% of British NS group. Opting out was used by 2% of Saudi KSA and only 1% of Saudi UK respondents.

The chi-square test across groups showed that any differences were not significant, at $p < .05$ and the p-value was .410973. When comparing the two Saudi groups in terms of their explicit and implicit usage strategy, the result was not significant at $p < .05$. The p-value was .185581.

Comparing the two Saudis groups with British NS was also not significant at $p < .05$. The p-value was .652196 for Saudi KSA versus British NS. For Saudi UK versus British NS, the p-value was .514233.

The situation involved a symmetrical relationship for Saudi respondents. There was no power, no social distance between colleagues and the topic of the compliment on the home constitutes an imposition in terms of the ability to own a house. It has the potential of attracting envy from others and that is why some participants opted to use protective religious words in their compliment.

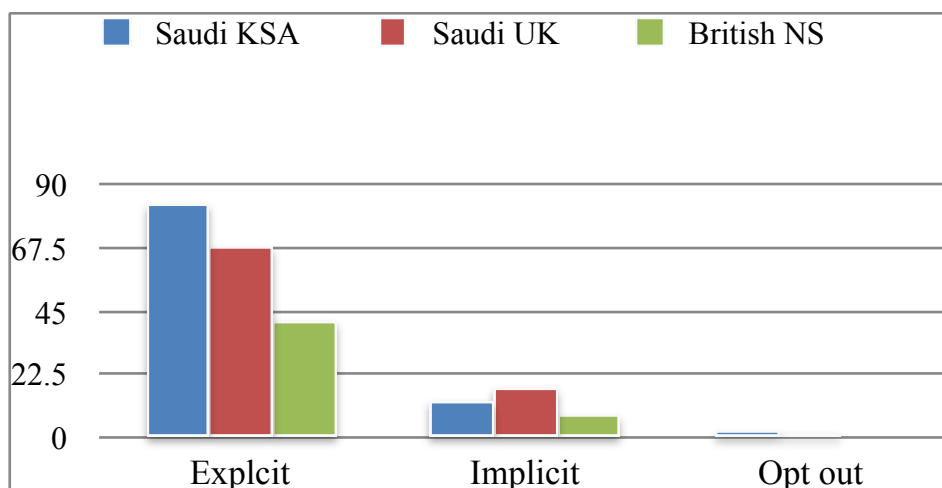


FIGURE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 4

The figure shows that Saudi KSA respondents used an explicit strategy more than the other two

groups while the Saudi UK group preferred implicit compliments the most among the three groups, but these differences were not statistically significant.

On a micro level, Strategy 4 (explanation) was employed by Saudi UK respondents 15 times, Saudi KSA respondents used it 9 times, whereas British NS respondents did not use this strategy at all. It seems that complimenting someone on their house has two aspects: it can be a compliment about owning a house or having a well-decorated house. It can be about the ability to afford it and in such a case, it is an achievement, or it can be about the ability to decorate it and in this case, it is a compliment on ability.

Examples taken from the three groups show the diversity of responses. Sample responses from the two Saudi groups include cultural references due to the sensitivity of the topic, as explained in the previous section:

(117) Mash'allah its a very nice house (Saudi KSA.no.2) [*MashAllah*].

(118) Mashaallah you have a nice house (Saudi KSA.no.7) [*MashAllah*].

(119) I would say *mashallah* you have a very amazing house (Saudi KSA.no.38).

(120) Wow *mashallah* ur house is very beautiful (Saudi KSA.no.68). [your]

Some respondents added a phrase in literal translation from Arabic:

(121) Your house is lovely just like you (Saudi KSA.no.9)

Some commented on the decoration explicitly as in:

(122) this house reflects your personality perfectly, It's awesome! (Saudi KSA.no.84)

(123) I love the design! your parents must be creative! (Saudi KSA.no.46)

(124) Your decorating is flawless (Saudi KSA.no.17)

Some expressed their liking without expanding:

(125) You have an amazing house (Saudi KSA.no.12).

(126) A very nice house, good choice (Saudi KSA.no.34).

Some were more specific about what aspect of the house they liked:

(127) Wow such a comfortable house .. I like it so much (Saudi KSA.no.15).

(128) Your house is really nice its so comfy to live in (Saudi KSA.no.58).

(129) Your house make me feel relax and com i love it (Saudi KSA.no.59).

(130) Your house is nice and i think your lifestyle is healthy and you tend to live in modern house
(Saudi KSA.no.101).

Some respondents compared their houses with the host's, an indication of possible feelings of envy:

(131) You have a nice home i wish i have a house like this (Saudi KSA.no.95).

(132) You have a beautiful house I guess that we have the same style (Saudi KSA.no.89).

A few asked some information questions:

(133) Your house is very huge and nice, is your father an engineer? (Saudi KSA.no.86)

(134) The decor great, who made it? (Saudi KSA.no.74)

One preferred to opt out:

(135) I'm not going to say anything. it's okay i'm always act normal but if he asks me i'm going to
respond him back (Saudi KSA.no.72).

As for the native speakers, the majority gave explicit compliments, and a few gave implicit compliments.

Examples of explicit compliments were a

(136) Wow, I love your house! (British NS.no.2)

(137) You have a beautiful house (British NS.no.5).

(138) What a lovely house you have, I really like it (British NS.no.11).

Some used an informal way to express their compliment:

(139) By the way, you have a great place. (British NS.no.36).

(140) You're house is so cute I love it! Feels really cosy (British NS.no35)

Some compliments are intensified as in the examples below:

(141) Gosh, your house looks really fab, just great! (British NS. no.20).

(142) What a gorgeous house. Ask them how long they have lived there and so on (British NS.no. 33)

Some even asked for a tour:

(143) I love your house - can I have a tour? (British NS.no.15).

Others asked general information questions about the house:

(144) I love your house! Did you have to much to it yourself? (British NS.no.30).

(145) Your house is beautiful, how long have you been living here? (British NS.no.32).

One complimented on the decor of the house:

(146) This is such a nice house, I really like_____. <- Something I find intriguing (British NS.no. 23).

(147) Your house is really quirky, you have great taste (British NS.no.26).

Saudi UK examples contained more implicit compliments, as in:

(148) Your house is very nice (Saudi UK.no.1).

(149) Lovely house. the house speaks about itself (Saudi UK.no.43).

Some explained why they liked the house:

(150) I really like your house, very cosy and warm' (Saudi UK.no.4).

(151) Nice house mate I hope you always live happy and in peace in your house (Saudi UK.no.13).

(152) Your house is well organised it reflect your personality (Saudi UK.no.32).

(153) I like your house, it feels so comfy (Saudi UK.no. 22).

Some complimented the decor or asked about it:

(154) You have a lovely house..did you design it yourself? (Saudi UK no.27).

(155) Your house so beautiful, or i would say what i like specifically about her/ his house (Saudi UK no.85).

(156)Thnak you for inviring me to your house. You have a good taste, your house and your interior design looks amazing (Saudi UK.42) [Thank. Inviting].

(157) You've an amazing house. I know you did all these beautiful things (Saudi UK no.36).

In some compliments the idea of owning a house provoking envy was clear:

(158) You are so luky, your house is so nice (Saudi UK.no.8) [lucky].

(159) I wish my house is as nice as yours! (Saudi UK.no.47).

(160) I'll say *mashallah* you have a very nice taste, your house is well designed and furnished Or Your house is beautiful (Saudi UK no.89).

(161) Your place is wonderful ... I wish I mine is just like yours... (Saudi UK.no.79)

(162) What an amazing house, I am impressed (Saudi UK.no.70)

(163) You really deserve it With Your hardwork. I wish you a happy time on it (Saudi UK.no. 69).

(164) Wow!! how much you pay a week for this house? (Saudi UK.no.65).

Asking about the cost or having a strong response are associated with envy because it is not socially appropriate to enquire about the cost of something. Generally, Saudi UK and Saudi KSA expressed their appreciation in a similar way by explaining what they found special about the house. Some examples clearly show the stereotypical associations between a house and a happy life or a house and good taste in decor. The inclusion of protective words such as '*MashAllah*' to protect against the evil eye was more common in the Saudi KSA responses than the Saudi UK responses. However, examples from Saudi UK also supported the idea that owning a nice house attracts envy.

British NS were more likely than the other two groups to express their appreciation by asking information questions. This explains why micro strategy 4 was used by the two Saudi groups but not found within the British NS data. Saudi groups needed to provide lengthy compliments because

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of the importance in Saudi culture of owning a house.

5.2.5 Situation 5

You meet a (non–Arabic) classmate for the first time in class and like his or her laptop bag; what would you say to him or her?

Groups	Explicit	Implicit	Opt-out
Saudi KSA	49	41	5
	49%	41%	5%
Saudi UK	46	30	15
	47.9%	31%	15.6%
British NS	27	15	4
	54%	30%	8%

TABLE 14: MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 5

In this situation, all three types of strategies were used. The percentage of explicit compliments used by the Saudi groups is almost equal, 49% in the Saudi KSA group and 47.9% in the Saudi UK group while 54% of compliments used by the British NS group were explicit. Implicit compliments were used extensively in this situation compared to previous situations: 41% of Saudi KSA responses, followed by 31% of Saudi UK responses and 30% of British NS responses. Across the three groups, the Saudi UK group opted out the most, with a percentage of 15.6%, followed by British NS at 8% and Saudi KSA at 5%.

The chi-square test showed a p-value of .097853. The result was not significant at $p < .05$ across groups. The chi-square test comparing the two Saudi groups in terms of their explicit, implicit and opt out strategies resulted in a p-value of .034804. The result was significant at $p < .05$. Comparing Saudi UK and British NS, the p-value was .423595. The result was not significant at $p < .05$.

Comparing Saudi KSA and British NS was also not significant at $p < .05$ and the p-value was .420687.

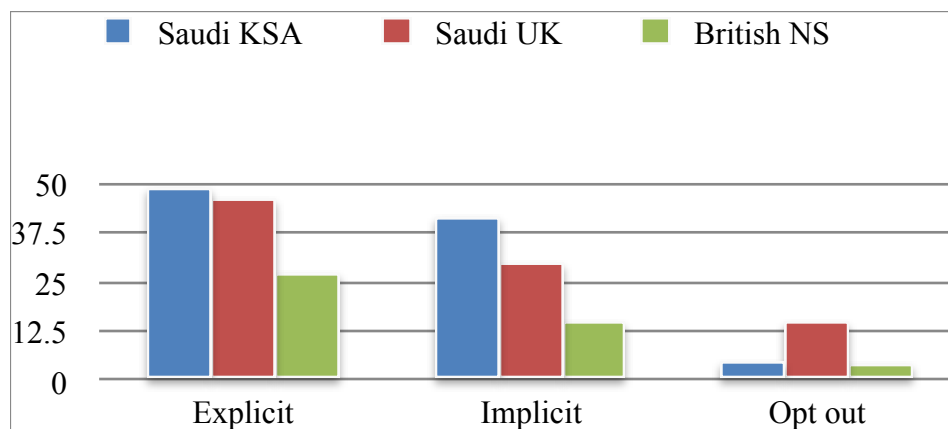


FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 5

The figure shows that the British NS group favoured explicit compliments the most, while Saudi KSA favoured implicit compliments and Saudi UK favoured opting out. The situation is symmetrical, with no power between classmates, but social distance and possible imposition can occur since the situation discusses one's possessions.

On a micro level, Saudi groups used Strategy 5 (Information Question) extensively: Saudi UK respondents used it 27 times, and Saudi KSA respondents used it 31 times. The British NS group did not use the strategy at all as they reported the highest rate of explicit compliment usage across the groups.

Saudi KSA responses varied. Some enquired about the item's cost or where it was bought:

(166) Hello there. i like your laptop bag it how much did you get it for (Saudi KSA.no.1).

(167) Woow it is wonderful laptop bag where did you buy this bag? (Saudi KSA no. 25).

(168) where did you get your bag from? it really suits you (Saudi KSA.no. 28).

(169)Your laptop bag looks useful and comfortable, could you tell me where did you get it from?

(Saudi KSA.no.54).

(170) Hi i like your bag so much, i think it's comfortable right? (Saudi KSA.no.82)

Some extended their compliments by explaining the reasons:

(171) I like your bag it is so nice and easy to handle (Saudi KSA.no.58).

(172) That's a nice laptop bag. it seems very spacious (Saudi KSA.no.56).

(173) Your laptop bag is so beautiful, its perfect and i like it (Saudi KSA.no.80).

Some chose not to comment: Opt-out examples

(174) Nothing (Saudi KSA.no.14)

(175) Again nothing not very social :) (Saudi KSA.no.2)

(176) I'd not comment on someone i just saw (Saudi KSA.no.46).

One respondent did not give a compliment directly but tried to use the topic to start a conversation:

(177) I see your bag in the mall , i like it but i don't know why i didn't buy it (Saudi KSA .no.92)
[Do not.

Did no]

British NS expressed their compliment using explicit strategies as in:

(178) That's a cool bag (British NS.no.7).

(179) Your laptop bag looks really nice, so elegant! (British NS.no.20).

(180) I like your bag - very *** whatever it was I liked about it ** (British NS.no.30).

(181) I do like your bag, it's smart/unusual/great colour (British NS.no.6).

Some enquired about the laptop bag:

(182) I like your bag, where did you get it? (British NS.no.27).

(183) I like your laptop cover. Where did you get it from? (British NS.no.13).

While some started phatic talks as in:

(184)Hi, I'm Jenny. Great bag you've got there, does it fit everything in? I always find once i have
my laptop in I have no space for anything else (British NS.no.22).

(185)Wow, where did you find a bag like that? I have looked everywhere for one just like this
(British NS.no.23).

(186) Hi, I'm Kat. Your laptop bag is lovely! (British NS .no.48).

And one suggested that nothing or an explicit compliment with an enquiry is the norm as in:

(187) Nothing probably I like you bag where did you get it. (British NS.no.41).

The Saudi UK group also opted out but more extensively than the other groups, as in:

(188) I will say nothing (Saudi UK.no.6).

(189) Nothing, I don't know him (Saudi UK.no.14).

(190) I won't say anything because it's the first time to meet her/him (Saudi UK.no.34).

(191)Probably nothing but if I have to, I would say I like your laptop bag and I would ask about
the brand and maybe the size of it (Saudi UK.no.42).

(192) Maybe nothing (Saudi UK .no.87)

(193) I wont ask (Saudi UK.no.76). [will not]

Others were more tentative (redressive actions) in enquiring about the laptop bag, as in:

(194)Hello, I reallly liked your bag its so beautiful, do you mind asking from where did you buy it
(Saudi UK.no.89).

(195) Hello. That is a nice laptop bag, where did you get it from? (Saudi UK.no.83).

(196)Your bag attracted me. I was looking for something like this, where you get it from? (Saudi
UK.no.69).

(197)Hi! I'm always looking for a good lap top bag and yours looks really nice! Can I ask you
where you got it from? (Saudi UK.no.26).

(198) Hey! I'm MJ . that bag looks unreal! Where did you get it from? (Saudi UK.no.65).

Some who expressed their compliments explicitly nonetheless indicated the need for redressive
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actions:

(199) Self introduction and small chat. Then, I would say I like your laptop bag (Saudi UK.no.57).

Some enquired about the bag in a casual way:

(200) Nice bag. where did you get this (Saudi UK.no.40)

(201) You know you've a nice laptop bag. Could you tell from where you bought it?? (Saudi UK.no.36).

Respondents described what they liked about the bag:

(202) Nice bag/ like the pattern (Saudi UK.no.91).

(203) 'Nice bag very practical and I love the pockets (Saudi UK.no.4).

Generally, this situation seems to be complex despite the relaxed context and casual topic. The Saudi UK group showed a high level of tentativeness. The Saudi KSA group was eager to explain the features or the details of the laptop when they gave a compliment by comparison with other groups. British NS enquired about the item more and expressed their compliments more explicitly. There was a tendency to use redressive actions by the British NS and Saudi UK groups.

5.3.6 Situation 6

Your (non-Arabic) classmate just finished presenting his or her research project in class which you thought was really good. On their way back to their seat, what would you say to them about their presentation?

Groups	Explicit	Implicit	Opt-out
Saudi KSA	85	14	0
	85%	14%	0%
Saudi UK	83	9	1
	86.4%	9.3%	1%
British NS	43	7	0
	86%	14%	0%

TABLE 15: MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 6

In this situation, the majority of the participants used explicit compliments, followed by a small number of implicit compliments. Saudi KSA used explicit compliments the most at 85%, their UK peers at 86.4% while 86% of the British NS group used explicit compliments. 14% of Saudi KSA, 9.3% of Saudi UK and 14% of the British NS group used implicit compliments. Only 1% of the Saudi UK group opted out.

The chi-square test across groups showed that the p-value was .61548 and the result was not significant at $p < .05$. Comparing Saudi UK and Saudi KSA, the p-value was .355037. The result was not significant at $p < .05$. The chi-square test comparing Saudi UK and British NS showed a p-value of .447769. The result was not significant at $p < .05$. The comparison between the Saudi KSA and British NS group was also not significant, at $p < .05$. The p-value was .981312.

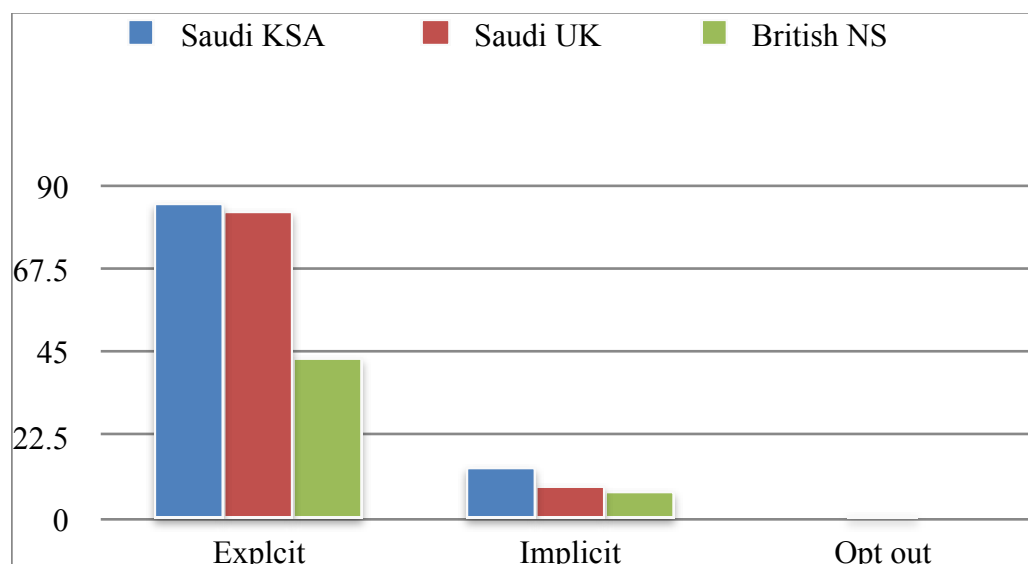


FIGURE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 6

The figure shows that the three groups performed equally in terms of the explicit use of compliments. Implicit compliments were used more by British NS and Saudi KSA than by the Saudi UK group.

The situation is symmetrical in that there was no power, but there was social distance and a possibility of imposition because of the topic. The topic of the situation discussed ability and performance, which can be a threatening topic in a classroom context. Students can be very sensitive about their academic performance.

On a micro level, the most used strategy across groups was Strategy 4 (Explaining). The Saudi KSA group used it 11 times, followed by Saudi UK, 9 times and British NS, 5 times.

Compliments across the groups were quite similar as these examples illustrate:

Saudi KSA respondents used friendly casual words to praise their classmates as in:

(204) Good job man u killed it (Saudi KSA.no.2).

(205) You were great my friend (Saudi KSA.no.4).

(206) IT WAS MARVELOUS MY BOYYYY (Saudi KSA.no.6) [Marvelous]

(207) Your presentation was great, you did well (Saudi KSA no.12).

Some literally translated encouraging words from Arabic as in:

(208)U did a good job up there tiger (Saudi KSA.no.13). *Tiger here serves as an encouraging word representing strength.*

Or they offered advice or feedback:

(209) Good job stay at what you are (Saudi KSA.no.22).

(210) You did the best, go ahead (Saudi KSA.no.88).

Some explained why they liked the performance in their expressions of encouragement:

(211) You were active and i like your carismatich (Saudi KSA.no.101) [Charisma]

(212) You was great and I think you look confident. Good job! (Saudi KSA.no.83).

(213) That was great, I think you are work really hard on it (Saudi KSA.no.74);

(214) It's a very nice project you deserve the full mark (Saudi KSA.no.35).

(215) I like you presenting so much you have a imaginary mind (Saudi KSA.no.96).

Some explained what they liked about the presentation itself and not only the presenter as in the previous examples:

(216) The presentation was very clear, you received the information very well (Saudi KSA.no.54).

Some made reference to competition inside the classroom, which implies a certain imposition; the other student's good performance obliges the complimenter to do just as well when it is their turn:

(217) You did a great job but i won't lose. i can't wait to show you my (Saudi KSA.no. 28). [mine]

(218) Wow that was great. i couldn't tell that you were nervous. good job (Saudi KSA.no.56).

(219)Hey you did very great in your research i was happy for you and i hope i can do well too wish me luck (Saudi KSA no.94).

Others showed admiration:

(220) Your looking amazing also your project was very good and i learn a new things from you thanks (Saudi KSA.no.82).

(221) Nice presenting, how do you find it if you teach me? (Saudi KSA.no.86)

British NS respondents also used explicit compliments, as in:

(222) That was brilliant - well done! (British NS.no.2)

(223) Well done! That was really interesting (British NS.no.12).

(224) Well done, nailed it, good shot (British NS.no.26).

Some used encouragement words to make their compliments more specific:

(225) Well done, that was a good presentation, very clear and well structured (British NS.no.24).

(226) Well done! Your presentation was so good and really easy to follow, you did so well! (British NS.no.32).

(227) Great research project, god choice of topic, I found it really interesting (British NS.no.46).

(228) That was really interesting/thought provoking. Well done. (British NS.no.50).

(229) Your presentation was really good, you should be really pleased with yourself! (British NS.no.35).

Some responses included request for tips:

(230) Your presentation was great. Can you give me some tips for mine? (British NS.no.45).

One response suggested that one would normally be nervous: admiring the person for their confidence as in:

(231) Great job! You didn't look nervous at all! (British NS.no.23).

Saudi UK respondents also used explicit compliments, as in:

(232) Nice presentation you were great (Saudi UK.no.3).

(233) Good job .. you nailed it (Saudi UK.no.7).

(234) Bravo, very excellent presentation. I really like it (Saudi UK no.16).

Some chose to include a gesture as a way of being friendly:

(235) Good job (with a wink) (Saudi UK.no.20)

(236) Geat job! (and I would thump up) (Saudi UK.no.53). [Great]

Others used colloquial phrases:

(237) Way to go buddy! You definitely nailed that presentation! (Saudi UK.no.83).

(238) You were fire (Saudi UK.no.22). *In English, it is 'on fire', however in Arabic fire is used as an adjective to show admiration. (A literal translation)*

Some explained what they liked, using a sophisticated level of English expression:

(239) Wow you were fantastic up there! I can tell you practised hard! (Saudi UK.no.30).

(240) Super excellent. Excellent presentation. You made every point clear (Saudi UK.no.36).

(241) Well done, you've demonstrated that you were knowledgeable about the topic (Saudi UK.no.39).

(242) Waht a performance . nice speach and clear voice. I really enjoyed listening to it (Saudi UK.no.43) [What. Speech]

(243) Great job! That was very impressive. You seem to be very well-prepared (Saudi UK.no.59).

Some referred to being proud of their achievement:

(244) I'm proud of you (Saudi UK.no.66)

One stated that they would offer specific feedback:

(245) I will give her or him feedback in a positive points (Saudi UK.no.87).

Generally, all groups gave explicit positive compliments. The Saudi groups tended to enhance their compliments by explaining what they liked more than the British NS group. The Saudi UK group seemed to use a more sophisticated level of English than their Saudi KSA peers to deliver their ideas in this context. Saudi KSA used friendly appellations such as *my friend, man, my boy and tiger* which are culturally appropriate in Saudi Arabia. British NS used explicit compliments or expanded on what they liked about the presentation.

In part two the themes found in the data are discussed.

5.3 Part Two

Different themes emerged from the qualitative analysis process. Five themes were found as forms of politeness; acts of ‘doing the act of complimenting’ in the form of explicit or implicit compliments: two were examples of positive politeness, which included exaggeration, expanding and explaining; three were examples of negative politeness, which included explicit compliments using religious words, the tendency to use redressive actions and asking for information. The last theme was an example of a politeness strategy which is not doing the act, the opting out strategy.

5.3.1 Exaggeration (positive politeness): in Situations 1,2,6

Exaggeration and enthusiasm are forms of positive politeness according to politeness theory. These were found in responses that can be categorised as explicit compliments. The explicit compliment strategy (including enthusiasm, exaggeration and intensification) was used by the Saudi KSA group but not exclusively by them. The topic and social power relationships in the situations seem to interact with the use of the strategy. For example, in Situation 1, Saudi KSA respondents exaggerated and intensified their compliments by thanking the host, telling the host that the food was the best meal they ever had, telling the host that they would come back for more. British NS respondents also showed enthusiasm by using words like ‘amazing’ and ‘thanks a million’ and intensified the act by exaggerating that they would say thank you ‘multiple times’. Surprisingly, Saudi UK did not show enthusiasm in this situation compared with their Saudi KSA peers and instead favoured implicit compliments, which could be the cause for the chi-square result being significant. One reason for this difference could be that the Saudi UK group changed their behaviour towards friends and did not see the necessity to exaggerate to show their appreciation of hospitality, and so they treated the food topic differently. With that being said, Saudi UK

respondents used a large number of explicit compliments but did not show noticeable enthusiasm.

In Situation 2, Saudi KSA intensified their compliments by using friendly ways to mock a close friend on their appearance. For example, (32) used 'fool' to call a friend jokingly, another by indicating that the sunglasses were made for that friend. In these exaggeration acts it seems that Saudi KSA used friendly ways to compliment their friends by intensifying their compliment to show sincerity and enthusiasm. In example

(36) the participant indicated that they would compliment 'shockingly', which indicates that intensification is part of complimenting behaviour for Saudi KSA. British NS and Saudi UK respondents, on the other hand, used explicit compliments but without enthusiasm or exaggeration.

In Situation 6, enthusiasm and exaggeration were found because of the topic. Saudi KSA respondents used supporting phrases such as 'you killed it' or 'you were fire' and also used the word 'tiger' to congratulate their classmates on their performance. Saudi UK respondents also proposed new ways of showing enthusiasm, indicating that they would 'thump up' or 'wink' at their classmates for their good performance. They also used phrases to intensify their encouragement such as 'nailed it' or 'proud of you' and 'you were fire'. British NS respondents did use explicit compliments but did not intensify these acts. It seems clear from Situations 1,2 and 6 that the Saudi KSA liked to intensify the acts when complimenting friends, close friends or classmates on performance or possessions. The Saudi UK and British NS did not show much enthusiasm, although some responses intensified the compliments in those situations.

It is possible that for Saudi UK and British NS respondents, exaggerating their compliments would not be the norm, whereas for Saudi KSA it seems essential to show sincerity and appreciation, mainly in Situation 1, but also in Situations 2 and 6.

In terms of Leech's principles of politeness, exaggeration for Saudi KSA can be viewed as an act of

modesty that minimises praise to self but can also be an act of approbation to maximise the benefits to others. Both British NS and Saudi UK seemed to be acting out of approbation as they did not exaggerate much. This could be because they both viewed it as an act of insincerity. This suggests that Saudi UK respondents have altered their behaviour and unlike their Saudi KSA peers, refrained from exaggeration in complimenting food but not as much in making compliments about possessions or performance. Exaggerating compliments on food to show appreciation is culturally expected in Saudi Arabia and yet the Saudi UK respondents chose not to do that. This can be a result of shifting behaviour, or a result of a deeper understanding of the imaginary receivers of their compliments being non-Arabic and that such compliments would not be the norm in this case. Although the situation wording included that it is happening with non-Arabic speakers, Saudi KSA group perhaps relied more on their own social norms, without a complete understanding of the context. This might be due to their level of English or because of limited exposure to the target culture. This shows that emphasising that the act was with a non-Arabic speaker did not change or affect massively Saudi KSA choice of strategies.

5.3.2. Expanding and Explaining (positive politeness): In Situations 2,3,4,5,6

According to politeness theory, expanding, giving reasons or explaining are features of positive politeness (refer to chapter 2, section 2.4.1). This is an indication of doing an act with redressive actions, using different ways to deliver the compliment that support the addressee's positive face needs. Examples of expanding and explaining compliments were within explicit compliments. In some situations, and for some participants, it seemed that it was essential to expand on compliments. It seemed that this strategy depended on the topic of the situations where it was found. For example, in Situation 2, some Saudi KSA participants explained the compliment on sunglasses by indicating what was special about them: 'this sunglasses is change your face to the

best' or that it made their friend look 'so cool'. British NS respondents also expanded their compliments and explained why they liked the sunglasses by providing reasons, such as in 'Super glasses, they really suit you'. Saudi UK respondents shared this strategy with the other two groups, and provided reasons for their compliments, as in 'Your Sunglasses looks pretty awesome, as if it's made for you'. The relationship of the situation for the Saudi groups seemed to affect the strategy used. So, for example, in order to compliment a friend on possessions, it is preferable to expand and give details. This was also found in the British NS data, although with less details. Saudi groups used longer sentences and more detail. This is not surprising as similar studies show that Arabic language and Arabic speakers have a preference for longer compliments or compliment responses (see section 3.3.5).

In Situation 3, the topic was the same as in Situation 2, but the relationship was different. When talking to a stranger, many felt it was presumptuous to start the conversation with a compliment. In such cases, explicit compliments occurred baldly with redressive actions, although a compliment might be considered a face- threatening act and perceived as envious or flirtatious (see section 3.2.2 for more on compliment functions). As has been previously explained, in the Arab world, complimenting an expensive item is seen as potentially attracting the evil eye. Complimenting a stranger did not seem to always require expansion. This confirms the importance of social distance and the effect of power on complimenting behaviour.

Although Situation 4 also focuses on a possession, the type of relationship is different (colleague), and so the expanding and explaining strategy occurred. The Saudi KSA expanded their compliments about the house by praising the decor or the taste of the owner in decorating. Some explained that the house looked comfortable and made them feel relaxed. Some said that it is a nice feeling to feel comfy inside one's own house and even compared their houses with the host's house. British NS respondents also explained what they liked about the decor or how the house felt comfy or looked

‘quirky’. The Saudi UK group also used this strategy to express their opinions on the decor or how the house represented someone’s personality.

Saudi UK respondents also expanded their compliments by reinforcing the idea of why a house can be enviable by stating how lucky the host is to have such a house. The compliments also contained references to how hard work paid off when someone has a nice house. Across groups, the topic of the situation created different types of compliment expansion which involved either complimenting the decor or the owner’s lifestyle.

Situation 5 involved complimenting the possession of a classmate. Although the topic was the same (possession) the possession itself (the laptop bag) did not potentially attract envy the way owning a house does. The relationship did not involve social distance though. The use of expanding and explaining was found across the groups because of the nature of the topic. Saudi KSA explained what they liked about the bag, whether it looked spacious or easy to handle. Saudi UK respondents also commented on specific features of the bag, such as ‘Nice bag/ like the pattern’ or that the bag looked ‘practical’. British NS made explicit compliments but did not expand as much as the two Saudi groups.

In Situation 6, Saudi KSA respondents expanded their compliments and gave their imaginary classmate details about their performance, for example by saying that the classmate looked confident or active or that ‘The presentation was very clear, you received the information very well’. In this situation and unlike in previous situations, British NS respondents tended to expand their compliments and gave details. They explained what they liked about the presentation by praising the choice of topic or that the performance was clear and easy to follow. Saudi UK respondents also expanded their compliments on performance by detailing that the voice was clear, or the points were made clear by the presenter. In one example, the complimentee gave an explicit compliment and evaluated the presenter by saying, ‘Well done, you’ve demonstrated that you were

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knowledgeable about the topic'. It is clear that explaining and expanding the compliment was favoured by the two Saudi groups, notably when complimenting friends and classmates, regardless of topic. British NS respondents did so more when complimenting performance than possessions, as in Situation 6 versus Situation 2. Culturally, compliments about possessions may be considered bad taste in the UK, particularly when offered to strangers.

In terms of Leech's principles of politeness, the approbation maxim can explain the extensive use of explaining and expanding to show solidarity in situations with friends and classmates. It supports the maximising approval of others and was notable in responses which included details about the performance or features of the appreciated items. This adheres to the face wants and the needs of others. This was used by British NS respondents when complimenting the performance of a classmate, which made sense because of the context whereas the two Saudi groups used it on other occasions. This might be because complimenting without explaining might feel strange between friends, as the norm is to reinforce solidarity on such occasions. One of the ways to do so is by expanding and intensifying compliments to show the sincerity of the compliment. The two Saudi groups achieved this through offering longer compliments, which is one of the reported features of Arab ways of complimenting to demonstrate sincerity (see section 3.3.5).

5.3.3 Explicit compliments and religious words (Negative politeness): in Situation 4

According to politeness theory, a speech act with redressive actions is a form of negative politeness. Using explicit compliments with religious expressions such as '*MashAllah*' is a way of steering away the evil spirit or protecting against the evil eye. This strategy was used by Saudi KSA participants in Situation 4. The situation required the participants to pay a compliment about a house, a topic that is culturally sensitive in Saudi Arabia and in some other countries as well. Owning a house or having a nice house could attract the evil eye from others, and so people tend to

start their compliments using protective words to emphasise their goodwill and ensure that they do not attract the evil spirit. This strategy is traditionally in relation to expensive or highly valued items and was mainly found in Situation 4 because of the context.

Examples from the previous section include:

(117) ‘mash’allah its a very nice house’ (Saudi KSA.no.2) [*MashAllah*]

(118) ‘Mashaallah you have a nice house’ (Saudi KSA.no.7) [*MashAllah*]

(119) ‘i would say *mashallah* you have a very amazing house’ (Saudi KSA.no.38).

(120) ‘Wow *mashallah* ur house is very beautiful’ (Saudi KSA.no.68) [Your]

On one occasion, it was also found in Situation 3 in a compliment offered to a stranger on their watch: ‘your have a nice watch mashallah’ (Saudi KSA.no.96).

This strategy was found to be used extensively by the Saudi KSA participants. There was one instance of it being used by a Saudi UK respondent, no.96:

‘i’ll say *mashallah* you have a very nice taste, your house is well designed and furnished Or Your house is beautiful’.

In terms of Leech’s principles of politeness (1983), this act represents a tendency towards the tact principle which ‘minimises the expression of beliefs that imply cost to others; maximises the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other.’ (p.132). The relationship between the speakers in this situation did not seem to affect the use of the principle or the religious expressions because the concept of the evil eye does not exclude envy from friends, colleagues or family members. It is safer to be tactful than to engage in a potential act of envy in Saudi culture. Saudi UK respondents did not employ this strategy as much as the Saudi KSA group, perhaps because of a greater awareness that the compliment is being paid to a non-Arabic colleague or because they no longer use these expressions as much as their peers; possibly due

to assimilation to the UK culture. Although Saudi KSA respondents showed awareness of the context, it seems they are used to the Saudi cultural norms and were less likely to have been exposed to environments where they had to interact with non-Arabic speakers.

5.3.4 Tendency to take redressive action (negative politeness): in Situations 3, 5

According to politeness theory, using redressive actions is a form of negative politeness.

Redressive actions can be in the form of self-introduction, addressing names, small or phatic talks and were found attached to explicit compliments. These forms were used to attend to negative face needs and as part of avoiding face- threatening acts. Redressive actions were mainly found in Situation 3 where complimenting a stranger on their watch could be a face-threatening act and in Situation 5 when complimenting a new classmate's laptop bag. This strategy was employed the most by the British NS respondents by introducing themselves before making the compliment or apologising for asking about the watch, or engaging in small talk by asking about the party, before complimenting someone on an object:

(94) 'Sorry if this is weird, but that watch is really cool' (British NS.no.28).

Saudi UK respondents also used this strategy in the form of self - introductions or apologising for approaching the person"

(110) 'Hi, my name is_____. I'm from_____. Nice watch you got there' (Saudi UK.no.57).

Saudi KSA respondents also used the strategy in the form of self-introduction or engaging in small talk. The difference was that their redressive actions seemed to serve to start a conversation with a stranger more than the other two groups. For example, one respondent did not enquire about the shop that sells the watch but enquired about whether the watch was vintage or not. This indicates that the question was not seeking information as much as

allowing a conversation to start between two strangers:

(74) ‘nice watch.is it vintage?’ (Saudi KSA no.56)

In Situation 5, which required participants to compliment a new classmate, redressive actions were also found across the groups. Saudi KSA respondents used redressive actions to start a conversation.

Examples show that some questions were not seeking information or just being chatty:

(170) ‘hi i like your bag so much, i think it's comfortable right?’ (Saudi KSA.no.82).

(177) ‘i see your bag in the mall, i like it but i don`t know why i didn`t buy it’ (Saudi KSA.no.92)

British NS respondents used redressive actions as well as self-introduction to share common ground, by stating that they ‘as well’ had been looking for a similar item. Saudi UK respondents used this strategy with caution and mainly introduced themselves before complimenting a new classmate. Examples of indicating common ground include ‘Your bag attracted me. I was looking for something like this’ in the Saudi UK data or ‘I have looked everywhere for one just like this’ from the British NS data. It seems that this was favoured as a way to start phatic talk with a new classmate or a stranger before enquiring about the item or making an explicit compliment. Sharing common interests seems to be a basic ice breaking strategy, as suggested clearly by participants in a number of responses, for example ‘self-introduction and small chat. Then, I would say.... etc’.

In terms of Leech’s principles of politeness, this strategy can be described as following the tact principle that minimises imposition on the other and maximises the benefit to the other by adhering to their positive face wants with the least amount of imposition. The imposition can be a result of meeting a new classmate and using a compliment with redressive actions would possibly break the ice and avoid giving offence by invading the complimentee’s personal space

5.4.5 Information enquiry (negative politeness): in Situations 1,2,3,4,5

According to politeness theory, engaging in an act with redressive actions, such as asking questions, is a form of negative politeness. It is worth mentioning that the use of this strategy was always in combination with explicit compliments in the dataset. The strategy was found in all situations and used across groups to different degrees.

In Situation 1, Saudi KSA respondents enquired about the origin of the food and the questions were asked in a friendly way because of the relationship. British NS respondents were most likely to enquire about the recipe for the dish and it seemed essential once they liked it, to ask for information. Saudi UK respondents asked the same questions as the other two groups, making enquiries about the origin of food and requesting the recipe. This shows a tendency for both Saudi UK and British NS groups to act in similar ways and perhaps explains why they scored the highest among groups in the use of implicit compliments. One interesting example, although it did not contain a compliment, from a Saudi UK respondent illustrates this: ‘Is this pork? If not. Give me the recipe!’.

In Situation 2, this strategy (information question) was rarely used by the Saudi KSA group while British NS respondents used it extensively whether to enquire about the shop that sells the sunglasses or the cost. Saudi UK respondents also enquired about where it had been bought but not the cost. Enquiring about the cost of an item is uncommon and avoided in Saudi culture because it has the potential of putting the person who receives the compliment in a position where they feel imposed on and perhaps pressured to offer the item as a goodwill gesture.

In Situation 3, Saudi KSA respondents enquired about the watch in different ways by asking about the name of the brand or where it was bought. The British NS group continued to enquire about the shop of the item with the use of redressive actions. The Saudi UK group did not enquire about the item in this situation.

The relationship between the speakers (strangers) seems to affect the way people reacted to this situation: Saudi KSA respondents asked questions to break the ice; British NS respondents enquired using redressive actions through information questions; and Saudi UK respondents preferred the opt-out strategy. In terms of Leech's principles of politeness, the tact principle seemed to capture the responses of the Saudi KSA group and some of the British NS group's responses, in that they both tended to maximise the benefit of the other, and minimise the cost to the other. The British NS and Saudi UK respondents seemed to act in line with the approbation principle where it is preferable to praise others but to remain silent when that is not possible.

In Situation 4, a Saudi KSA respondent enquired about the person who decorated the house to show their admiration while a British NS respondent asked for a tour of the house or asked about the cost of the rent. They also enquired generally about the length of stay in the house or the decor. Saudi UK respondents also enquired about the design of the house. In this context, it seemed more polite to enquire about the decor than the cost and the Saudi groups seemed to follow this principle. According to Leech's principles of politeness, groups asked questions to satisfy the other's need for approval, which is an act of maximising the benefit of the other and is in line with the tact principle.

In Situation 5 (laptop bag), information questions were used broadly by all groups. The topic of the situation allowed questions to naturally occur and this might explain the higher rate of implicit compliments that included information questions. Saudi KSA respondents enquired about where the item was bought but, as with previous situations, were less likely to enquire about cost. British NS also enquired where the item was bought but used questions with redressive actions to start introducing phatic talk. One British NS enquired 'does it fit everything in?'.

Saudi UK respondents used carefully redressive actions to enquire about the bag. Most of the questions were about the bag shop, using self-introduction or small talk, but not about the cost of the bag. According to Leech's principles of politeness, the overall principle that captures the use of this strategy is the tact principle, which involves carefully adhering to positive face needs and to negative politeness by avoiding imposition. Some of this was achieved through enquiring about the shop where the item was bought and not the cost of the item and some of this was achieved through the use of redressive actions before enquiring about the items. As in Situation 3, the receiver of the compliment was a stranger.

5.3.6 Avoidance strategy, opt-out: in Situations 3,5

According to politeness theory, choosing not to act is choosing not to engage in a face-threatening act. This strategy was found in Situations 3 and 5 across the groups. The chi-square test comparing the use of the strategy across the three groups showed no significant differences at $p < .05$. The p-value was .111792.

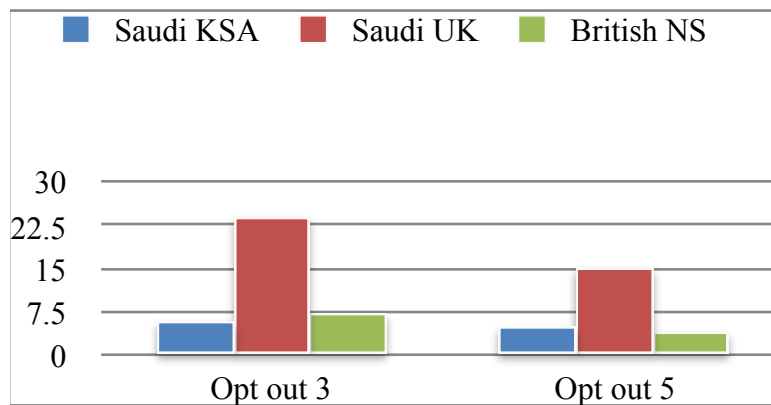


FIGURE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF OPT-OUT STRATEGY ACROSS GROUPS

The figure 8 shows that Saudi UK used this strategy the most in both situations. Comparing the two Saudi groups usage of this strategy showed that the p-value was .675859. The result was not significant at $p < .05$

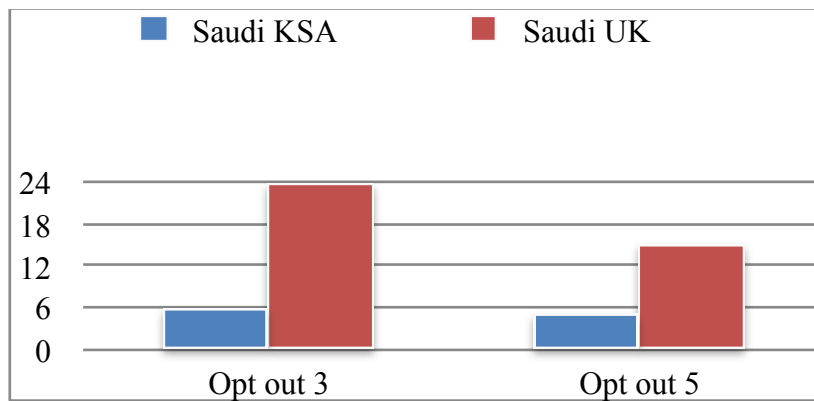


FIGURE 9: DISTRIBUTION OF OPT-OUT STRATEGY BETWEEN SAUDI GROUPS

Figure 9 shows that the Saudi UK group used the strategy more than the Saudi KSA group in both situations.

The similarity between Situation 3 and 5 is based on two factors: both discussed compliments on possessions and both involved a socially distant relationship. These two factors seemed to affect all groups to favour the use of the opting out strategy and differences between the responses to the two situations were insignificant. It is worth mentioning that in both situations, the Saudi UK respondents used this strategy the most among the three groups.

In Situation 3, Saudi KSA reasons for opting out included:

- Not knowing the person
- Just having met the person
- Not being sociable

British NS reasons for opting out included:

- It would be rude and forward
- Not knowing
the person

Saudi UK:

- It would not be a possible move
- Not knowing the person

- Not possible to ask anyone about something they are wearing
- Not possible to compliment a stranger, especially at a party

The common reason given across the three groups was not knowing the person. One Saudi KSA response was for being not sociable, otherwise it could be possible to give a compliment. The British NS response was that it would be rude culturally to do so and the Saudi UK response was to consider the context of the party. Saudi UK respondents also mentioned that it is not possible to comment on what people are wearing and that could be because it could make the situation uncomfortable with strangers. It could be seen as an act of flirtation or put the stranger in a position to offer the item out of feeling imposed on. (see sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.6.2).

According to Leech's principles of politeness, this strategy is considered an act of approbation. The principle suggests that it would be polite to either maximise benefit to the other or not do the act to minimise the cost 'threat' to the other by remaining silent.

In Situation 5 (laptop bag), similar reasons were given for opting out by the Saudi UK group, either not being very social to do so or not knowing the person making it inappropriate. British NS did not opt out in this situation except for one participant who suggested a preference for not commenting. Respondents in the Saudi UK group opted out more than the other two groups, giving similar reasons for doing so, i.e. not knowing the person, meeting them for the first time while some did not disclose their reasons for opting out. According to Leech's principles of politeness, this can also be considered acting on the tact principle because not choosing to do the act minimises the cost to the other. In the case of Situation 5, the imaginary new classmate was treated like a stranger, and so some participants chose not to do the act or to remain silent.

It is worth noting that opting out and the tendency to redressive action strategies were both

exclusively found in Situations 3 and 5. This suggests that the topic (possession) and relationship (social distance) affected the responses. Participants resorted to redressive actions when choosing whether to make the compliment or to opt out. In general, these two situations (watch and laptop) seemed to cause tension across the groups and required participants to seek different strategies to ease the tension. One more important observation is that significant differences were found between the two Saudi groups in Situations 3 and 5 which indicates a possible change in the behaviour of the Saudi UK students compared to their Saudi KSA peers, at least when dealing with strangers (including new classmates). The difference was notable despite being instructed that these situations were happening with non-Arabic speakers, both in the instruction section and in the wording of the questionnaires.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the results have been presented both quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to investigate compliment production in detail. Some situations did not show a significant difference at the macro level, but interestingly, qualitative analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of the responses and the use of strategies, in light of politeness theory and Leech's principles of politeness. The themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis revealed differences between the two Saudi groups in comparison with the British NS group and between the two Saudi groups. For example, their preference of politeness principles which governed their strategy usages. The effect of the immersion environment was reflected in the differences found between the two Saudi groups; Saudi UK and Saudi KSA. For example, in situation 1 Saudi UK did not show enthusiasm with the topic of food as much as their KSA peers. The questionnaire included clear instructions regarding the situations involving non-Arabic speakers, but it would seem that while the Saudi UK group seemed to take this into account in

their responses, the Saudi KSA group did not because there were some instances of literal translation from Arabic.

The next chapter will present the data for compliment responses.

Chapter Six: Compliment Responses Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by comparing the compliment response-macro strategies of accepting, deflecting and rejection adopted by the three groups of respondents: King Abdul-Aziz University students (Saudi KSA), Saudi UK students (Saudi UK) and British English Native Speakers (British NS). It then presents the results of the discourse completion tasks for the 9 situations in detail, first by comparing the use of micro strategies across groups and then by presenting supporting qualitative examples from the data.

The results chapters aim to provide answers for the research questions. The study also sought to establish whether there was any evidence of cultural assimilation among the Saudi UK group in terms of similarities of strategies and responses between the Saudi UK and British NS groups. For each situation, general observations of the implications which are then discussed further in chapter seven. At this point of the discussion, the effect of social distance and power variables is not reported for each group of respondents, but some qualitative comparisons are drawn between the groups on the impact of these variables and how they are affected by cultural and religious factors. Spellings mistakes within data are corrected in square brackets but grammar mistakes and unusual uses of English (L1 interference or literal translations) are not, unless they seriously impede understanding

6.1.1 Overall micro-strategies results

A table was created to group the statistical results across the groups. The data from the Saudi KSA group was compared with data from the Saudi UK group. Then, the data from Saudi KSA was compared with the British NS, data from Saudi UK was compared with the British NS, and finally, data across the three groups was also compared. This was done in order to identify differences or

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similarities and to locate any changes between the two Saudi groups. In the table showing the chi-square test results below, S stands for ‘significant’ and NS stands for ‘Not significant’.

Common 3 Micro Strategies	Saudi KSA- Saudi UK	Saudi KSA- British NS	Saudi UK- British NS	Across 3 groups
Situation 1	S	NS	NS	NS
Situation 2	NS	S	S	S
Situation 3	S	S	S	S
Situation 4	S	S	NS	S
Situation 5	NS	NS	S	NS
Situation 6	NS	S	S	NS
Situation 7	S	S	NS	S
Situation 8	S	S	S	S
Situation 9	NS	S	S	S

TABLE 16: SUMMARY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES MICRO-STRATEGIES STATISTICAL RESULTS

The table shows that situations 3 and 8 were significant at all levels and across groups. The remaining results vary. The next section presents the results in detail.

6.2 Situation 1 (Receiving a compliment on food from a friend)

You invited your friends over to dinner. After they finish, one of them says to you: "the food was wonderful!" What would you say?

Situation 1	Acceptance	Deflection	Rejection
Saudi KSA	110 97.3%	2 1.7%	1 .88%
Saudi UK	67 97.1%	1 1.4%	1 1%
British NS	34 97.1%	0 0%	1 2.8%

TABLE 17 : MACRO-STRATEGIES ACROSS GROUPS IN SITUATION 1

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high across the three groups. The chi-square test and the data showed there were no significant differences among the three groups in terms of their macro strategy use. The p. value is .913948. The result is not significant at $p < .05$

The three main micro strategies used were: acceptance tokens, agreement, and acceptance token + agreement.

Situation 1	Acceptance Tokens	Agreement	Acceptance Tokens Agreement
Saudi KSA	62 54.8%	15 13.2%	15 13.2%
Saudi UK	27 39.1%	15 21.7%	18 26%
British NS	20 57.1%	5 14.2%	4 11.4%

TABLE 18: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION

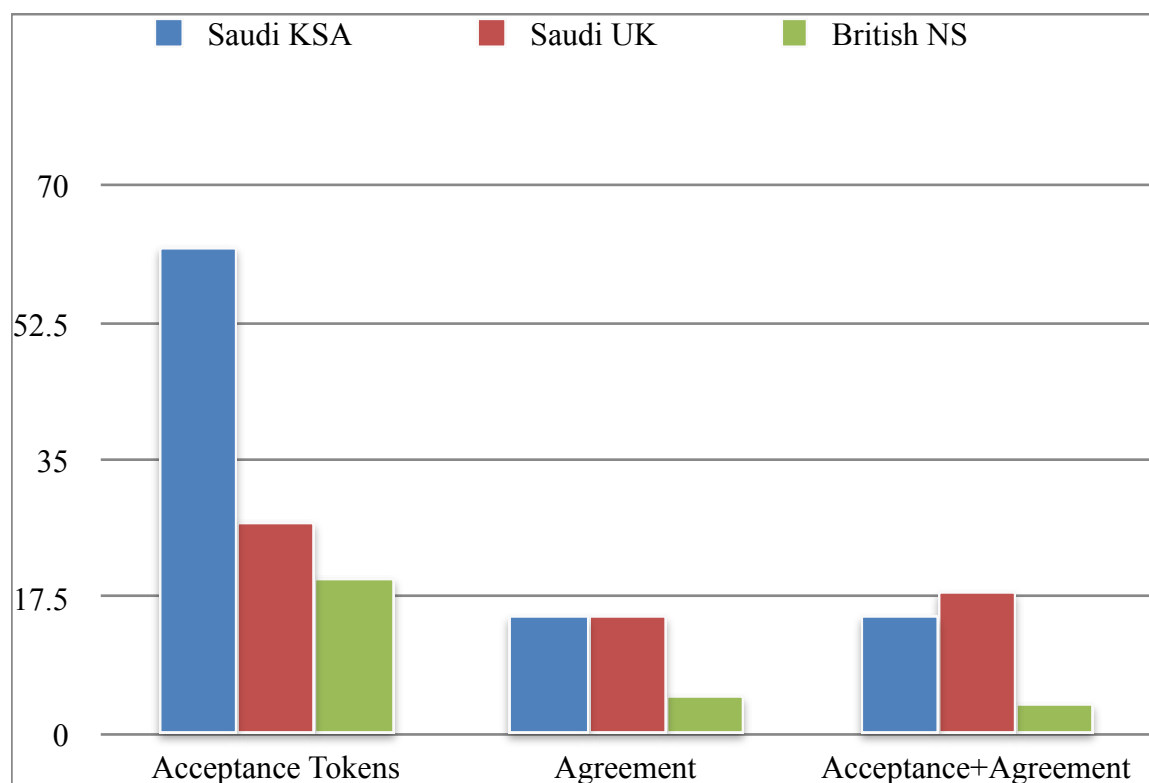


FIGURE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 1

Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK, the p-value is .021944; the result is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and British NS, the p-value is .947276; the result is not significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi UK and British NS, the p-value is .09407; the result is not significant at $p < .05$.

54.8% of Saudi KSA responses involved acceptance compared to 39.1% in the Saudi UK responses but 57.1% of British NS responses, which makes this group the highest users of this strategy.

The agreement strategy then was used in 13.2% of KSA responses data, 21.7%, of Saudi UK responses and only 14.2% of British NS responses. The use of acceptance tokens with agreement words reported in the data were as follows: KSA 13.2%, Saudi UK 26%, and 11.4% for the British NS.

In this situation, the dominant strategies are acceptance tokens and agreement which serve the same purpose where the figure show interesting differences in the way the groups of participants chose to accept or agree or use a combination of both. Saudi KSA accepted compliments the most, but also used cultural references at various points, as in the examples below:

(1) *Im glad that all of you are happy* يَمْرِي مَايَسْرِي مَحَل (Saudi KSA no.7) *This phrase in Arabic means 'may the food give you a healthy body'.*

(2) *That is of your taste* (Saudi KSA no.30) *A literal translation from Arabic means 'you say that because you have good manners'.*

(3) Thank you or welcome its nothing for you, if you want again to tell me (Saudi KSA no.40).

(4) Thank you, you can visit me and try it again if you want (Saudi KSA no.50).

(5) Thank you and I will invite you again (Saudi KSA no.14)

(6) Do you want more (Saudi KSA no.55)

That such responses were much less frequent in the Saudi UK than in Saudi KSA data, suggests cultural influence. Examples of the closest usages between the two Saudi groups are given below.

(7) U can join me anytime (Saudi UK no.2).

(8) Glad you like it or بِالْعَافِيَةِ (Saudi UK. no.45) *Arabic ritualistic word meaning 'may the food bring you wellnesses.*

In the previous examples (4-6), more food was offered, and some invitations issued to visit again. The examples taken from the Saudi UK data show a different way of understanding compliments about food.

One explained the type of food: Thank you! Its vegan! (Saudi UK. no.49)

Others offered the recipe:

(9) Thank you, I hope you enjoyed it. Do you want the recipe? (Saudi UK no.9)

(10) Thank you..glad you love it..need the recipe?? (Saudi UK no.59)

Others downgraded by deflecting the compliment to someone else:

(11) Thank you, it's my mother's recipe. (Saudi UK no.38)

One respondent said

(12) Thanks coz it was a complement (Saudi UK. no.52)

This suggests that the Saudi UK group is being influenced by their immersion experience and meta-pragmatic awareness to assess what is suitable to say when receiving compliments. This participant appeared to believe that he or she should say thanks with no invitation or offers, because thanking is supposedly the expected norm in this case.

By comparison, the British NS gave different reactions in accepting compliments on food. Some tried to explain how they felt about the occasion.

(13) Thank you, I enjoyed cooking it. (British NS. no.5)

(14) Thank you, we aim to please. (British NS. no.4)

(15) Thank you, I enjoyed having you here (British NS no.8) Some respondents preferred to

downgrade:

(16) Ah well it was ok. Something self-deprecatory. Thanks though. Sometimes I would say I know I love this recipe. (British NS no.24)

(17) Thank you..probably followed by a critical remark! (British NS no.34).

(18) Oh it was nothing (British NS no.22).

(19) Thanks, I tried! (British NS no.19).

In one response, the recipe was mentioned:

(20) Thank you! I thought I would try out a new recipe (British NS no. 15).

The situation has no social distance or power to cause any effect on participants responses. The only variable that seemed to have affected the response and caused some differences was the topic of the situation.

Although food is not a sensitive topic, people think about it or react to it in different ways. Food has its own traditions within different groups and is universally considered to be culture specific. The ability to cook good food or offer good hospitality is a fundamental part of Middle Eastern culture.

In Saudi Arabia, it is a way of showing generosity and affection. (Cuesta, 2015)

Clear evidence of a tendency among the Saudi UK respondents towards adapting to new cultural habits is that the only statistically significant difference was found between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK respondents. This can be inferred based on the fact that Saudi UK respondents did not offer any more food, much like the British NS. In other words, while there was a significant difference between the two Saudi groups, there were no significant differences between the Saudi UK and the British NS groups. While there is also no difference between Saudi KSA and British NS, the difference between the Saudi groups is interesting as they share the same background.

6.3 Situation 2 (Receiving a compliment on possession from a close friend)

One of your close friends sees you at the mall and compliments you on your new sunglasses; she/he says: “Wow! You look really trendy in those sunglasses!” What would you say?

Situation 2	Acceptance	Deflection	Rejection
Saudi KSA	96 84.9%	13 11.5%	4 3.5%
Saudi UK	68 98.5%	1 1.4%	0 0%
British NS	30 85.7%	3 8.5%	2 5.7%

TABLE 19: MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 2

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high across all the three groups. The chi-square test showed that there was a significant difference between the three groups in terms of their macro strategy use.

The p-value is .097439. The result is significant at $p < .05$

The three most frequently used micro strategies were: acceptance tokens, acceptance tokens+ return compliments, and acceptance tokens+ information comments.

Situation 2	Acceptance Tokens	Acceptance Tokens Information Comment	Acceptance Tokens Return Compliments
Saudi KSA	39 34.5%	15 13.2%	14 12.3%
Saudi UK	41 59.4%	8 11.5%	7 10.1%
British NS	12 34.2%	13 37.1%	1 2.8%

TABLE 20: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 2

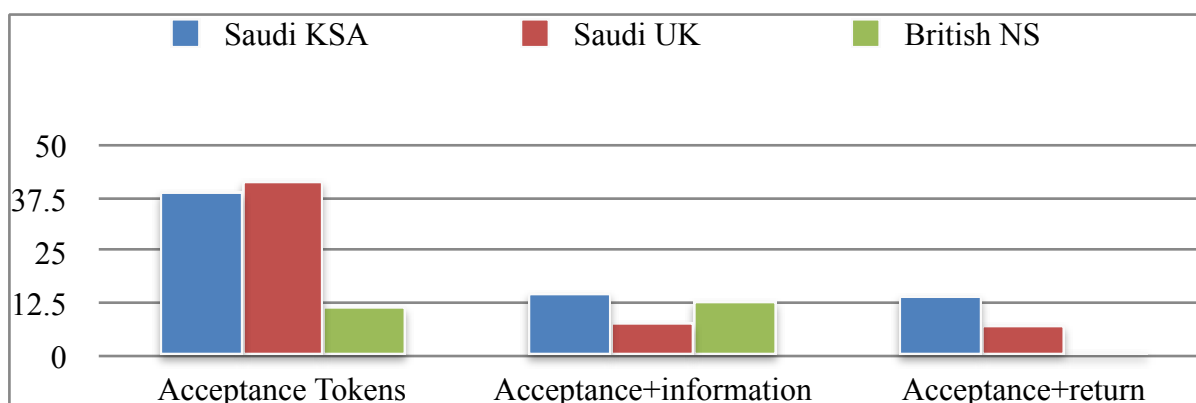


FIGURE 11: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 2

Between the three groups, the p-value is .003082, which is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK the p-value is .184135: the result is not significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and British NS native speaker the p-value is .013114: the result is significant at

$p < .05$. Between Saudi UK and British NS, the p-value is .002223: The result is significant at $p < .$

05.

In other words, both Saudi groups diverged from the native speakers on the usage of their micro-strategies. The Saudi KSA employed strategy acceptance tokens in 34.5% of their responses, 59.4%, of the Saudi UK responses employed this strategy and 34.2% of the British NS responses. The usage rates of acceptance tokens information comment were as follows: Saudi KSA, 13.2%, Saudi UK, 11.5%, and British NS, 37.1%. Acceptance tokens return compliments was used the most by Saudi KSA respondents 12.3%, less by Saudi UK respondents 10.1% and by only one by one British NS 2.8%.

In situation 2, Saudi UK were more likely to accept the compliment about the sunglasses than either Saudi KSA or British NS group. As is customary in Saudi culture, Saudi KSA group tended to offer the sunglasses to the complimenter, as in examples 23 - 26:

(23) Thank you, if you want it, you can take it (Saudi KSA no.60).

(24) Thank you if you want them, they are all yours (Saudi KSA no.74)

(25) Thank you so much i have an extra one if you want to have it (Saudi KSA no.2)

(26) I would say thanks, it would be more wonderful on you (Saudi KSA no.79)

This offering was not a strategy adopted by Saudi UK or British NS. It seems therefore that the Saudi students in the UK have learnt that you do not necessarily offer the object of admiration in the UK to the person giving the compliment. The closest they get to this is an offer to let them try on the sunglasses, in (27) and (28)

(27) Thank you, try them on (Saudi UK no.63).

(28) Wanna try them on? (Saudi UK no.59)

And, in one case, it is even suggested that the complimenter buy their own and where to buy them:

(29) Cheers, mate, amazon.com get yours (Saudi UK n.49).

The KSA and British NS groups showed some modesty in relation to how good they looked in the glasses, requesting reassurance in examples (30) and (31)

(30) Really?! thanks, I thought they didn't look that good. (Saudi KSA no.11)

(31)oh really? I thought it was not good enough, but I wore it anyway and thank you honey I feel confident now (Saudi KSA no.73).

Some examples expressed modest surprise

(32) Ha, Do I? (British NS no.20).

(33) You think so? Thanks :) (British NS no.18).

Some respondents rejected the compliment

(34) Me trendy? hah! (British NS no.14)

Or they downgraded the compliment by mentioning how the glasses hide the bags under their eyes or were inexpensive:

(35) Thanks, they hide the bags under my eyes :) (British NS no.22).

(36) oh, hey! Thanks, they were not even that expensive (British NS no.15).

Or they referred to using a gesture but not say anything specific:

(37) Probably just smile (British NS no.11).

In some cases, the Saudi UK respondents used similar ways of responding to the British NS but not the Saudi KSA data:

(38) Thank you, I just got them last week from that shop for only 10 pounds! (Saudi UK no.38).

(39) Thank, I'm trying my best (Saudi UK no.13).

(40) Thank you, I am trying ;) (Saudi UK . no. 16).

The opposite to downgrading was found in Saudi KSA data, as in the examples below:

(41) thank you its Gucci (Saudi KSA no.6).

(42) I do feel trendy on these sunglasses (Saudi KSA no.23).

One respondent downgraded the object by mentioning that it was bought in a sale:

(43) thanks! I got it on sale (Saudi KSA. no.8).

In terms of returning compliments, there was only one example in the British NS data:

(44) haha thank you, they'd suit you (British NS no.25).

In the Saudi KSA data, the number of returning compliments was higher than those found in the Saudi UK data. This comes as no surprise because the number of respondents is not equal (113 vs. 69); (Saudi KSA 12.3% vs. Saudi UK 10.1%). However, the Saudi UK data showed a tendency towards giving information more than returning compliments, as per the examples below:

(45) oh thanks you so nice (Saudi UK no.55).

(46) thank you, you are a nice person (Saudi UK no.31).

In addition, in returning compliments the Saudi KSA respondents were far more enthusiastic and warmer:

(47) Thanks! You look amazing too. (Saudi KSA no.63)

(48) Thank you, you look good yourself (Saudi KSA no.62)

(49) and you look so trendy with your hat (Saudi KSA no.50)

(50) uhm thanks, I like your shoes by the way they look rather splendid (Saudi KSA no.24)

Some respondents in this group clearly did not feel comfortable, as reflected in the following responses:

(51) *mashallah* (Saudi KSA no.20)

(52) its not of your business (Saudi KSA no.18).

(53)I will be shy so I am not going to say anething (Saudi KSA no.60). [anything] One response was probably a case of L1 pragmatic transfer:

(54) thanks, your eyes better (Saudi KSA no.30).

This is a literal translation from Arabic which is what Arabic speakers normally use when receiving a compliment. It means that you have nice eyes which see beauty in things.

The responses from the two groups of Saudis differed: none of these strategies was found in the Saudi UK data. It seems that complimenting on appearance and possessions is problematic. Whilst responses from Saudi UK differed significantly in terms of strategies when compared to British NS group, their responses were more similar to the British NS than Saudi KSA.

It is also worth noting that when no significant difference was found two between the Saudi groups, they were both different from the British NS. This pattern was repeated for Situation 5 which also involved a possession but not in Situation 3 which was also about possessions but with a stranger, so the social distance seemed to affect the responses.

6.4 Situation 3 (Receiving a compliment on possession from a stranger)

You are at a party: you are introduced to someone you have not met before, who says, “I love your watch”. What would you say?

Situation 3	Acceptance	Deflection	Rejection
Saudi KSA	108 95.5%	4 3.5%	1 .88%
Saudi UK	67 97.1%	1 1.4%	0 0%
British NS	32 91.4%	2 5.7%	1 2.8%

TABLE 21: MACRO-STRATEGIES USE IN SITUATION 3

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high across the three groups. The chi-square test showed no significant differences among the three groups in terms of their macro strategy use.

The p. value is .696142. The result is not significant at $p < .05$

Looking at micro strategies, the top three used strategies were: acceptance tokens, acceptance tokens+ return complements, and acceptance token+ information comments.

Situation 3	Acceptance Tokens	Acceptance Tokens+ Return Compliments	Acceptance Tokens+ Information Comment
Saudi KSA	35 30.9%	18 15.9%	17 15%
Saudi UK	42 60.8%	5 7.2%	10 14.4%
British NS	11 31.4%	0 0%	17 48.5%

TABLE 22: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 3

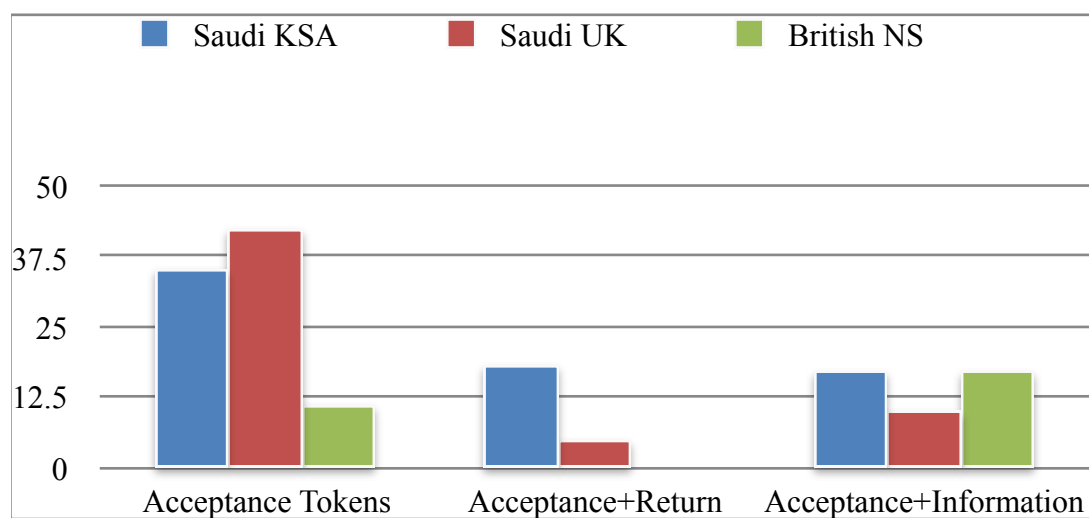


FIGURE 12: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 3

There is a significant difference among the three groups, where the p-value is .000024 at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK, the p-value is .013857; the result is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and British NS, the p-value is .00152; the result is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi UK and British NS, the p-value is .000527; the result is significant at $p < .05$.

30.9%, of Saudi KSA responses involved the use of acceptance tokens compared to 60.8% of Saudi UK responses and 31.4% of British NS responses. Acceptance tokens return compliment was used the most by Saudi KSA respondents 15.9%, less by Saudi UK respondents 7.2% and not at all by British NS respondents. Token information comment was used by all groups as follows: Saudi KSA 15%, Saudi UK 14.4% and British NS 48.5%. The British NS gave more information than the two Saudi groups.

In this situation, the Saudi KSA accepted compliments and gave information comments, but also used cultural references, as in the examples below:

(55) thank you, it's a rolex by the way (Saudi KSA no.56).

(56) Oh really? I just bought it. It was pretty expensive (Saudi KSA n.11).

(57) Thank you! It's a gift! (so I don't have to offer it to them) lol (Saudi KSA no.48).

(58) Thanks, I got it as a gift from my father for being a good son lol (Saudi KSA no.24).

One offered the item complimented on, as in this example:

(59) Thanks, you can take it (Saudi KSA no.79).

These acceptance responses were not found in the Saudi UK or British NS data. It seems that the immersion students learnt that, in the UK, one does not normally offer the object of admiration to the person giving the compliment. The examples below are taken from Saudi UK data which show no indication of offering objects:

(60) Thank you! It was a gift from my son! (Saudi UK no.16).

(61) Thanx I got it as a graduation gift (Saudi UK no.23).

(62) Oh thanks, I liked it even more now (Saudi UK no.33).

In some cases, the Saudi UK respondents used similar responses to those given by the British NS:

(63) Thank you and smile humbly (Saudi UK no.4)

(64) Thanks, I just bought it yesterday I was not sure if they are nice or not, but I love it (Saudi UK no.55).

(65) Thanks! I like the classic watch and I see have similarity (Saudi UK no.65).

These modest responses in the Saudi UK data are similar to examples from the British NS data:

(66) Really. It's old (Saudi UK no.51).

In this example, the compliment is accepted but in a modest way, as though trying to downgrade it.

Compare this with the following examples from the British NS group:

(67) Thanks! it's an old one, got it as present 10 years ago (British NS no.22).

(68) Thanks! It was not even that expensive (British NS no.26).

In another example, the respondent stresses the fact that the item is not new:

(69) Aw thank you, it was my mother's engagement gift from my father's parents (British NS no.2).

One British NS respondent offered to show the watch:

(70) Thanks, would you like to have a look? (British NS no.7)

Another British NS respondent explained further:

(71) Thanks, and then explain why I liked it or when I got it or where I got it if there was an anecdote or interesting story behind it. (British NS no.24)

The previous example suggests that the British NS respondents thought of items in terms of their age and as having an interesting history behind it that seemed worth telling or made it of greater

value, while Saudi KSA respondents made no reference to the past. The appreciation of history and vintage items is perhaps part of British culture. Interestingly, Saudi UK respondents did not follow the British NS patterns of response in this situation, nor did they give responses that were similar to their KSA peers. This might explain why the Saudi UK responses were significantly different both compared to Saudi KSA responses and British NS speaker responses. It could be that the Saudi UK group is learning new ways of responding to compliments on possessions; they may have become aware that offering the item is very much a cultural norm in Saudi Arabia, and To further investigate the differences identified in this situation, it is worth mentioning that the second most used strategy by the two Saudi groups was not used by British NS respondents at all. It was only found in the Saudi KSA data (15.9%) and Saudi UK data (7.2%).

The Saudi UK respondents were conservative in their ways of returning compliments:

(72) Thanks. We have the same taste then (Saudi UK no.13).

(73) Thanks, so nice of you (Saudi UK no.44).

(74) Thanks, I love yours too (Saudi UK no.66).

Saudi KSA were far less restrained, as in this example:

(75) I will tell him..I love anything he wear (Saudi KSA no.17)

Other respondents seemed to use compliments to establish a phatic conversation with a stranger:

(76) Thanks, we like the same kind of watches (Saudi KSA no.3).

(77) Thanks, I would love to know you better you are a nice guy (Saudi KSA no.9).

(78) Thanks, i like your hair style um what's your name again? (Saudi KSA no. 28).

(79) Thank you, I've already liked you, love your shirt too (Saudi KSA no.67).

The reason for these differences might be because of the type of relationship in the situation. The hearer is a stranger and therefore, social distance and ranking of imposition were high. Saudi KSA respondents may have felt the need to offer the object whereas the Saudi UK respondents were conservative in their responses which is perhaps evidence that their behaviour may have changed

due to living in an immersion environment. Certainly, the British NS group did not see the compliment as an opening to establish a phatic conversation.

6.5 Situation 4 (Receiving a compliment on possession from a colleague)

You invite your colleagues to have lunch at your house for the first time, when they arrive, one of them says to you: "your house is very nice!" What would you say?

Situation 4	Acceptance	Deflection	Rejection
Saudi KSA	106 93.8%	7 6.1%	0 0%
Saudi UK	68 98.5%	1 1.4%	0 0%
British NS	34 97.1%	0 0%	1 2.8%

TABLE 23 : MACRO-STRATEGIES ACROSS GROUPS IN SITUATION 4

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high across all three groups. The chi-square test showed there were no significant differences between the three groups in terms of their macro strategy use with the exception of rejection. The p-value is .50224. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

Looking at the micro strategies, the three most frequently used strategies were: acceptance tokens, acceptance tokens+ information comment, and 'others'. (i.e., strategies that were not found in Holmes' taxonomy, on which the analysis was based). All responses that contained invitations, cultural references and literal translations from Arabic of famous sayings, were categorised under the 'others' category.

Situation 4	Acceptance Tokens	Acceptance Tokens + Information Comment	Others
Saudi KSA	37 32.7%	21 18.5%	20 17.6%
Saudi UK	39 56.5%	6 8.6%	3 4.3%
British NS	22 62.8%	0 0%	1 2.8%

TABLE 24: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USE IN SITUATION 4

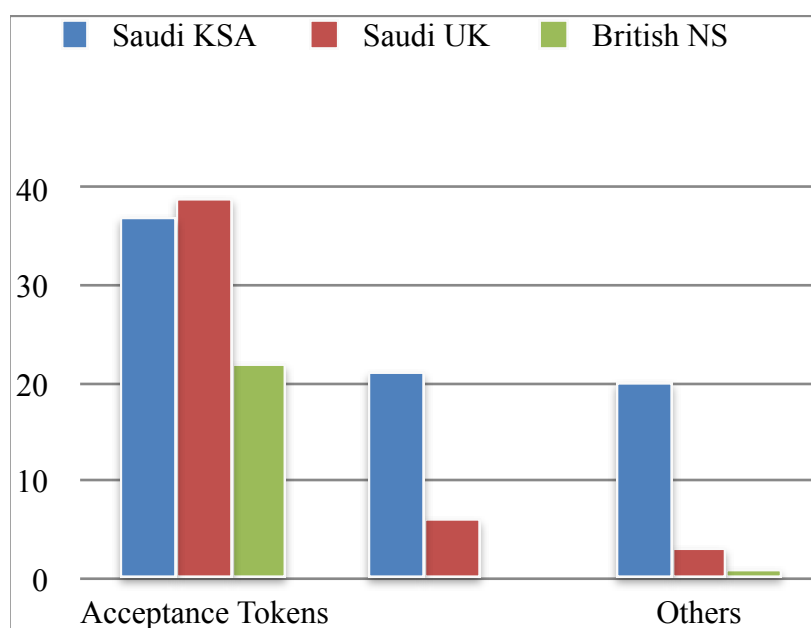


Figure 13: Distribution of micro-strategies in Situation 4

Across groups, the p-value is .000071. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi groups, the p-value is .000663. The result is significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi

KSA and British NS native speaker, the p-value is .000635. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

05. Between Saudi UK and British NS native speaker the p-value is .478841. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

It is notable that the Saudi KSA employed the strategy acceptance tokens in 32.7% of the responses, the Saudi UK 56.5%, and 62.8% of British NS. Acceptance tokens + information comment was found in 18.5% of the Saudi KSA responses, only 8.6% in the Saudi UK responses and none in the British NS responses. The category 'others' was found in 17.6% of Saudi KSA responses, in 4.3%, of Saudi UK responses and 2.8% of British NS responses.

In this situation, the dominant strategy was acceptance across all three groups. However, the Saudi KSA responses the 'others' category whereas this was not used to any great extent by Saudi UK or British NS responses. The 'others' category seemed to be used most by Saudi KSA respondents when receiving a compliment about a possession. This is interesting because of the importance, noted earlier, of 'owning a good house' is supposedly one of the main goals for people in Saudi society. It is a universal life goal, but it is a central goal in some societies and so less for others.

Examples from the Saudi KSA group reflect this:

(81) Thank you. Next time i want to se yours (Saudi KSA no.2). [see]

(82) thank you, we paid a lot for it (Saudi KSA no.3).

(83) Thank you for your praise (Saudi KSA no.4).

(84) Its from my hard work (Saudi KSA no.7).

Some used phrases that involved strong cultural references which were probably transferred from their L1. Examples (85-87)

(85) nice house for the nice people (Saudi KSA no.9).

(86) say masha'allah (Saudi KSA no.15) *MashAllah is used against the fear of evil eye.*

(87) Your eyes the nice :) (Saudi KSA no.17) *(This phrase also appeared in a previous situation).*

By contrast one Saudi UK respondent referred to this phrase as inappropriate:

(88) Your eyes are nice... haha im kidding i will say thanks (Saudi UK no. 27).

Following on from the fear of evil eye referred to previously, some clearly thought of the compliment as a competitive challenge between colleagues, as below:

(89) Thanks, i hope you can buy a better house (Saudi KSA no.26).

(90) thanks..I hope you will have better soon (Saudi KSA no.37).

This necessitated returning the compliment, as below:

(91) thanks, and your home is good as well (Saudi KSA no.50)

Some felt the need to offer an invitation of some kind in return for the compliment:

(92) Thank you you can come anytime (Saudi KSA no.74).

(93) Aw, thanks. I wish you guys could live with me, would be so much fun (Saudi KSA. no.83).

(94) come to live with me (Saudi KSA no.44).

The Saudi UK respondents took the compliments as opportunity to highlight their reason behind their choices, although they give less information comment and used 'others' strategies much less frequently than their Saudi KSA peers.

Some examples from the Saudi UK respondents are:

(95) Thanx yeah I was so impressed when I saw it the first time. I liked the large windows and open space (Saudi UK no.4).

(96) Thank you.. it's important to have a good house as most of the rest time is spent in the house (Saudi UK no.13).

(97) Ya you know what I like it about it the most is the area and the view (Saudi UK no.67).

Some showed a degree of modesty that was not found in the Saudi KSA data:

(98) Thanks, it was hard to find one (Saudi UK no.11).

(99) Aww thank you yeah it still needs a lot of work! (Saudi UK no.22).

(10) Thank you very much, it keeps me busy cleaning though (Saudi UK no.16).

(101) Thanks! You should see my housemates! (Saudi UK no.49).

The closest invitation words that were found in the Saudi UK data were:

(102) Thank you. You are more than welcome (Saudi UK no.5).

(103) Thank you please act like if it's yours (Saudi UK no.51).

It seems that Saudi UK respondents were conscious and aware of the social distance, as their responses were appropriate to an interaction among colleagues. By comparison with the British NS, acceptance tokens were still the preferred strategy.

The British NS referred to their feelings about the possession being complimented, as in the examples below:

(104) Thank you so much! I do love it here (British NS no.2).

(105) Thanks. I'm really happy here (British NS no.8).

One respondent suggested a tour around:

(106) Thanks! Would you like me to show you around? (British NS no.7)

But there was also modesty that sought to downgrade the compliment, much like the ones found in the Saudi UK data:

(107) Thank you - it's taken a while to get it right but we like it (British NS no.14).

(108) Thanks, it may look nice now, but you should've seen it a few hours ago! (British NS no.15)

(109) Thanks, we are only renting though (British NS no.18).

It seems that the topic caused all groups to feel anxious about receiving compliments and so they tried different ways of downgrading the compliment.

(110) Well thanks but there is so much that needs doing to it and go on to list the obvious work that needs doing (British NS no.24).

(111) Thanks, we were pretty lucky to get a good deal on it (British NS no.26).

The downgrading examples above are the opposite to example 82 from the Saudi KSA data and shows clearly the quite different responses from these two groups, which explains why the difference between the two groups was statistically significant in this situation.

One British NS rejected the compliment as in the example below

(112) Meh not really (British NS no.27)

There is a clear evidence in this situation of the Saudi UK respondents refraining from offering invitations and a preference for using downgrades in a similar way to the British NS speakers. By contrast, the Saudi KSA respondents frequently responded with an invitation and did not use downgrades.

6.6 Situation 5 (Receiving a compliment on possession from a classmate)

Someone you meet for the first time in class says to you: “your laptop bag seems really useful!”. What would you say?

Situation 5	Acceptance	Deflection	Rejection
Saudi KSA	74 65.4%	35 30.9%	4 3.5%
Saudi UK	59 85.5%	10 14.4%	0 0%
British NS	21 60%	14 40%	0 0%

TABLE 25 : MACRO-STRATEGIES ACROSS GROUPS IN SITUATION 5

In this situation, the acceptance rate was 85.5% in the Saudi UK group compared with 65.4% in the Saudi KSA group and 60% in the British NS group. The deflection strategy was identified in 30.9% of Saudi KSA responses and 40% of British NS responses both far higher than the 14.4%. identified in the Saudi UK group. The chi-square test showed there were significant differences among the three groups in terms of their macro strategy use, with the exception of rejection. The p-value is. 00778. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

The most common micro strategies were agreement, information comment, and acceptance tokens+ information comment.

Situation 5	Information Comment	Agreement	Acceptance Tokens + Information Comment
Saudi KSA	35 30.9%	31 27.4%	19 16.8%
Saudi UK	10 14.4%	23 33.3%	16 23.1%
British NS	14 40%	9 25.7%	5 14.2%

TABLE 26: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USE IN SITUATION 5

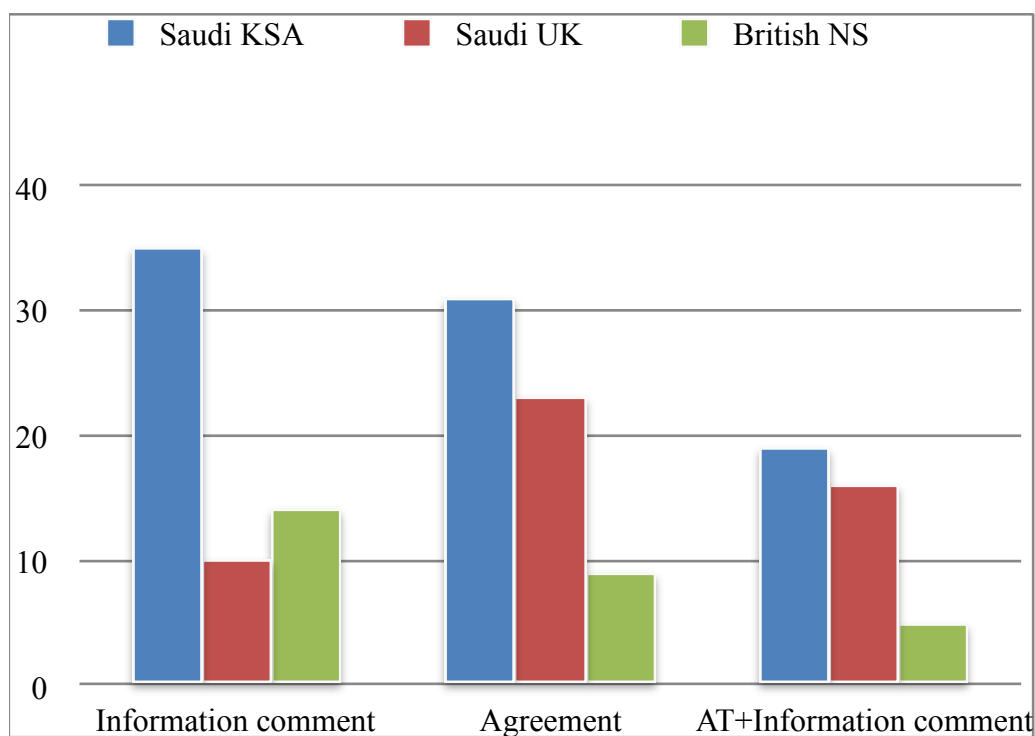


FIGURE 14: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 5

Across groups, the p-value is .070668. The result is not significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK, the p-value is .047363. The result is significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi KSA and British NS native speaker, the p-value is .70821. The result is not significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi UK and British NS native speaker, the p-value is .025037. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

Saudi KSA employed the information comment strategy 30.9% of the time, while Saudi UK only used it 14.4% of the time and the British NS used it 40% of the time. 27.4% of responses in the Saudi KSA data involved agreement while in the Saudi UK data the percentage was 33.3%, and in the British NS' data the percentage was 25.7%. The last strategy was acceptance tokens + information comment which was found in the data as follows: Saudi KSA, 16.8%; Saudi UK 23.1%; and British NS, 14.2%.

In this situation, Saudi KSA respondents showed a higher tendency towards agreement and information comment than acceptance tokens and information comments. Their responses were diverse. Although complimenting people on their possession is a sensitive topic in a society like Saudi Arabia, complimenting on a laptop bag did not seem to invoke the fear of the evil eyes, probably because the item is of less value than an expensive watch or a good house. It is not considered an expensive item and therefore is not considered to cause potential envy in others. For the above-mentioned reasons, it seemed that Saudi KSA responses to this situation contained recommendations, like in the examples below:

(113) You also should buy one like this. (Saudi KSA no.1)

(114) Thanks its useful you have to buy one (Saudi KSA no.9)

(115) Yeah it is pretty useful. Also, its very comfortable. I recommend you to buy it. (Saudi KSA no.11).

(116) thanks, then I will convince him to buy it to put his things in it. (Saudi KSA no.17).

(117) it is, and u should get one because its really helpful (Saudi KSA no.79).

Some liked to talk about its features. This could be because the compliment was focused on the usefulness of the laptop bag:

(118) I will tell him the truth if it true or not, tell him why and why not and give it to him if he want to see it (Saudi KSA no.81).

As in previous situations involving possessions some Saudi KSA respondents felt obliged to offer the item:

(119) thank you take it it will better on you (Saudi KSA no.6).

Notably, some used downgrades, unlike in other situations:

(120) Yeah, and it's on sale this month (Saudi KSA no.18).

As in Situation 2 some respondents used the opportunity to establish a conversation by offering one's name. Thanks to you, i bought it from Adidas store, i like urs the red one my favorite color. nice to meet you by the way my name is Anmar (Saudi KSA no.28).

Saudi UK respondents tended to agree more and were also more conservative than others in responding, using restricted responses in giving information about the usefulness of the item. One noticeable feature about their response was providing detailed description something that was not found in the Saudi KSA data:

(121) Thanx yeah I like bags with pockets (Saudi UK no.4).

(122) Yeah. It takes my laptop and all it's accesories together. It's handy (Saudi UK no.5).
[Accessories]

(123) It's. I like things with multi uses (Saudi UK no.13).

(124) Yeah I like how it _ (describe positive features) _____ but (any negative criticism of the bag). Would you like to try carrying it? You can buy it from _ for _____ \$. (Saudi UK no. 22).

(125) It is actually! I made sure it had these front straps to spread out the weight evenly (Saudi UK. no.23).

No one offered the item, offering is a feature rarely found in Saudi UK data, but the closest to this response gave indications where the item could be bought:

:

(126) Yup... it fits everything I need... you should check it online... (Saudi UK no.59).

(127) Yes, it is very useful maybe you should buy one (Saudi UK no.20).

(129) Thanks. If you need to buy a similar one go to... (store name) (Saudi UK no.30).

A good number of downgrading responses were also present, which is a feature commonly found in British NS data:

(130) Yeah, it does the job I guess (Saudi UK no.16).

(131) Thanks G. Student discount innit! (Saudi UK no.49).

These responses show clear assimilation to British NS compliment responses.

(132) Thanks, it does the job (British NS no.10).

(133)Yes, it's a really great one. It wasn't too expensive, but it's just perfect for what I need
(British NS no.34).

British NS also made recommendations in a similar way that was adopted by Saudi UK, as in the examples below:

(134)Yeah, it's really handy and makes it so much easier to carry my laptop around. I'd definitely recommend getting one! (British NS n.23).

In addition, some gave detailed descriptions:

(135) It is actually, I had a smaller one that only fitted the laptop in but this one is bigger and can fit everything in (British NS no.14).

(136) It really is, has this extra pocket for notes/keys (British NS no.15).

(137) It sure is - look at all of these pockets! (British NS no.22).

An example of modest agreement is shown below:

(138) It carries my laptop successfully, so I suppose you're right. Thanks! (British NS no.19).

In this situation, although Saudi UK mirrored the British NS way of responding, there was still a difference in their use of strategies. Perhaps the difference is that the British NS respondents did not use acceptance tokens as much as the Saudi UK respondents did. British NS agreed and described the items in most cases but did not use acceptance tokens as much. This also sheds light on why there was no significant difference between the two Saudi groups. The two Saudi groups seemed to understand that thanking words are important in classrooms. This situation was not taking place in a party or a mall like Situations 1 and 2. It could be that being in a learning environment made the Saudi groups more anxious about using appropriate responses. This is possibly in foreign language teaching textbooks which encourage the use of formal language, specifically thanking words in a situation like this.

6.7 Situation 6 (Receiving a compliment on performance from a teacher)

Your English teacher tells you that your performance is improving and that she/ he is very satisfied with your work. What would you say?¹

Situation 6	Acceptance	Deflect	Rejection
Saudi KSA	97 85.8%	15 13.2%	1 0.8%
Saudi UK	64 92.7%	5 7.2%	0 0%
British NS	34 97.1%	1 2.8%	0 0%

TABLE 27 : MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 6

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high among all three groups. The chi-square test showed no significant difference between the three groups in terms of their macro strategy use (only acceptance and deflect figures were included in the calculation, as so few respondents chose rejection).

The p-value is. 309693. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

¹ English teacher commenting on performance makes it acceptable for native speakers. English subject is taught in schools even for native speakers.

The common three micro strategies used in this situation were: acceptance tokens+ downgrades, acceptance tokens+ shift credits, and 'others'.

Situation 6	Acceptance Tokens+ downgrades	Acceptance tokens+ shift credits	Others
Saudi KSA	22 19.4%	19 16.8%	17 15%
Saudi UK	10 14.4%	11 15.9%	6 8.6%
British NS	10 28.5%	0 0%	2 5.7%

TABLE 28: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION

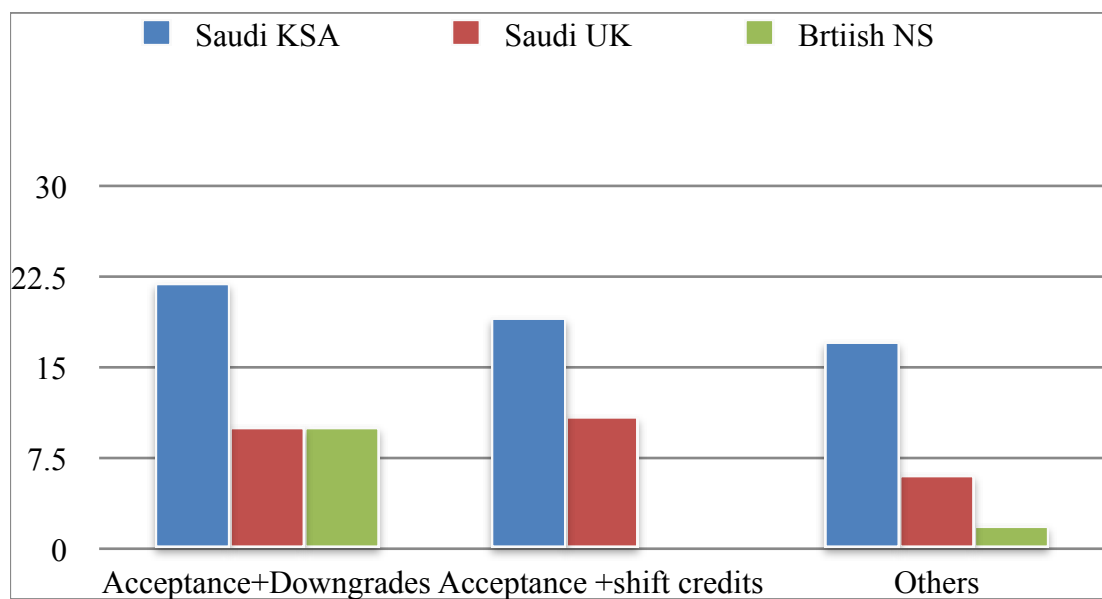


FIGURE 15: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 6

There is no significant difference among the three groups where the p-value is .0874493 at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK, the p-value is .712276; the result is not significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and British NS, the p-value is .034722. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi UK and British NS, the p-value is .045234. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

The difference is notable because 19.4% of the Saudi KSA responses employed the strategy of acceptance tokens +downgrades, while the Saudi UK used it in 14.4%, and British NS, in 28.5%.

Acceptance Tokens

+shift credits strategy was used in 16.8% of Saudi KSA responses, 15.9%, of Saudi UK responses and was not used at all by the British NS. The 'others' category was used the most by Saudi KSA 15%, followed by Saudi UK 8.6%, and by British NS 5.7%.

In Situation 6, the Saudi KSA used acceptance token downgrades and acceptance token shift credits the most as well as a good number of 'others'. The Saudi UK respondents, on the other hand, did not appear to favour the use of acceptance tokens shift credits but were keen to use acceptance token downgrades. The use of downgrades by this group was salient in other situations and in contrast to the Saudi KSA group who used this strategy far less. This may indicate that being in an immersion environment is influencing their responses, as the extensive use of downgrade but not shifting credit is a distinct feature of British NS responses to compliments. It seems that the Saudi UK participants are learning to downgrade compliments but without diminishing their own achievement by referring to someone else.

This contrast can be seen in the examples below, which show the use of shifting credits in the Saudi KSA responses:

(139) Thanks, its because you are my teacher. (Saudi KSA no.3)

(140) This by your advantage (Saudi KSA no.4) *A literal transition from Arabic means it is all because of you.*

(141) Thank you! But you taught me, I should thank you (Saudi KSA no.14).

(142) Am very proud of myself, and thank u I could not have dont it without u (Saudi KSA no. 15). [done]

(143) Because you are my teacher :) (Saudi KSA no.30).

(144) Thanks, I owe that to you! (Saudi KSA no.48).

(145) Really thank you teacher I will never be like that without your help you are the best (Saudi KSA no.64).

Some shifted the credit to Allah:

(146) that's from Allah then from your hard work teaching me (Saudi KSA no.7).

(147) if it was not for Allah then him (*the teacher*), I would not be here (Saudi KSA 17).

Some placed importance on the feedback they had received, as in

(148) think you so much teacher and I hope you are happy and statsfide (Saudi KSA. no.71)

[Thank. Satisfied]

It seems that the subject was happy that the teacher is satisfied, which means that getting the compliment from a teacher has an important impact on their performance because the subject met the teacher's expectation (see chapter 3 for teacher role in Saudi Arabia).

Although some Saudi UK respondents used similar ways of expressing their gratitude, they used more sophisticated vocabulary (149-151):

(149) Thank you that's the result of what you grow (Saudi UK no.9).

(150) Thank you for supporting me all the way, could not do it alone (Saudi UK no.16).

(151) Thank you for your encouraging words and for being a good teacher (Saudi UK no. 31).

Some acknowledged the effort of their teacher while not diminishing their own merit, as in (152-155):

(152) Oh really thank you I got your advice and work with it (Saudi UK no.67).

- (153) I always learn good stuff from you. You are one of the reason (Saudi UK no.48).
- (154) Thank you, your instructions were very helpful (Saudi UK no.44).
- (155) Thanks I am glad, it's you who pushed me to do my best. I appreciate it (Saudi UK no.8).

A few examples were similar to responses found in the Saudi KSA:

- (156) That's all because of you. (Saudi UK no.3)
- (157) All the thanks to you after greeting Allah (Saudi UK no.52) A number of Saudi KSA also used downgrading:

- (158) Thanks I try to keep up with the class and improve myself (Saudi KSA no.24).
- (159) I still feel like I need to improve (Saudi KSA no.56).
- (160) Thank you, I have been studying really hard in the last few weeks (Saudi KSA. no. 62).

The use of 'others' strategy in this situation was found in a series of promises made mainly by Saudi KSA students, as seen in the examples (161-164):

- (161) Thank you for supporting, I'll keep doing my best (Saudi KSA no.18).
- (162) Thanks, I will try to improve more and be the best student (Saudi KSA no.45).
- (163) Thanks to you teacher, I'll keep working hard on my English (Saudi KSA no.63).
- (164) Thanks, I will keep going (Saudi KSA no.12).

One requested a reward

- (165) Give me mark please (Saudi KSA no. 29).

And some felt happy because of the recognition that is associated with rewards inside classrooms:

- (166) Really??, I m so happy to hear that alhamdulleh (*Thanks to god*) (Saudi KSA no. 70)
- (167) I'm proud of your observation of my hard work (Saudi KSA no.34).

On the other hand, the Saudi UK expressed their happiness about the recognition:

(168) My hard work paid off (Saudi UK no.11)

(169) Thank you very much, I have been working very hard to improve my performance (Saudi UK no.17).

(170) Thank you, I usually perform better under pressure (Saudi UK no.23).

(171) I'm glad that you are able to see my improvement (Saudi UK no.35).

Some used the 'others' category differently. In this example, the participant asked a question:

(172) Thank you, How can I improve myself more (Saudi UK no.61).

A similar response was found in the British NS data

(173) Thank you! I have been working hard on it. Are there any areas I could pay closer attention to? (British NS no.6)

(174) Thank you for that feedback-If there is any other way that I could improve then that would be very helpful (British NS no.22).

Some modest promises were found in the Saudi UK data, but none in the British NS native speaker data.

(175) I appreciate your kind words. I'll make sure to develop even more (Saudi UK no. 59).

(176) I am looking to do my best. (Saudi UK no.28)

British NS were more likely to express how they felt about the compliment and their work, as in the examples below:

(177) Its great to hear you say that..I put a lot of time and effort into it (British NS no. 13).

(178) Thank you, I have been working very hard on this topic. (British NS no.15) Downgrades were found in this situation as well as in previous situations:

(179) Thank you, I'm so glad. I wasn't sure I was doing so well (British NS no.18).

(180) Thank you but I still have an awful way to go and then list the things I am not so good at or need work (British NS no.24).

(181) Thank you..I feel that I'm beginning to make progress (British NS no.10).

Two of the respondents stated they would simply use gesture rather than words:

(182) Nothing. Just smile (British NS no.21)

(183) Thank you (Plus a big smile) (British NS no.34)

This situation is impostional and the compliment on performance from a teacher seemed intriguing to many respondents as per the examples found in the data. For example, the number of 'others' strategy used by Saudi groups which included promises as well as the number of shift credits responses. The responses from two Saudi groups were significantly different from the British NS which perhaps indicates that praise from a teacher had greater significance.

The role of the teacher in Islam is considered an important role and the teacher figure is considered like a prophet. That is why respect is due, and this could explain that there was no difference between the performance of the two Saudi groups. Furthermore, performance can be viewed as a sensitive topic in Saudi Arabia which involves certain cultural expectations in Saudi Arabia. This is further explored in the next chapter. In the next situation (7) where the compliment was from a boss to an employee, the Saudi UK response results differed from that of their Saudi KSA peers. This may be because, unlike the teacher figure, a boss does not have the same significance. It was also noticeable that where there was no significant difference between the two Saudi groups their responses were significantly different to that of the British NS.

6.7 Situation 7 (Receiving a compliment on achievement from a boss)

Your boss tells you that she is giving you a promotion for all the hard work you have done.

What would you say?

Situation 7	Acceptance	Deflect	Rejection
Saudi KSA	110	1	2
	97.3%	.8%	1.7%
Saudi UK	67	1	1
	97.1%	1.4%	1.4%
British NS	34	1	0
	97.1%	2.8%	0%

TABLE 29 : MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 7

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high among all three groups. The chi-square test showed no significant differences among them in terms of their macro strategy use.

The p-value is .913948. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

The top three strategies are: others, acceptance tokens, and acceptance tokens+ downgrades.

Situation 7	Others	Acceptance Tokens	Acceptance Tokens Downgrades
Saudi KSA	32	24	18
	28.3%	21.2%	15.9%
Saudi UK	15	30	4
	21.7%	43.4%	5.7%
British NS	3	21	3
	8.5%	60%	8.5%

TABLE 30: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGE OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 7

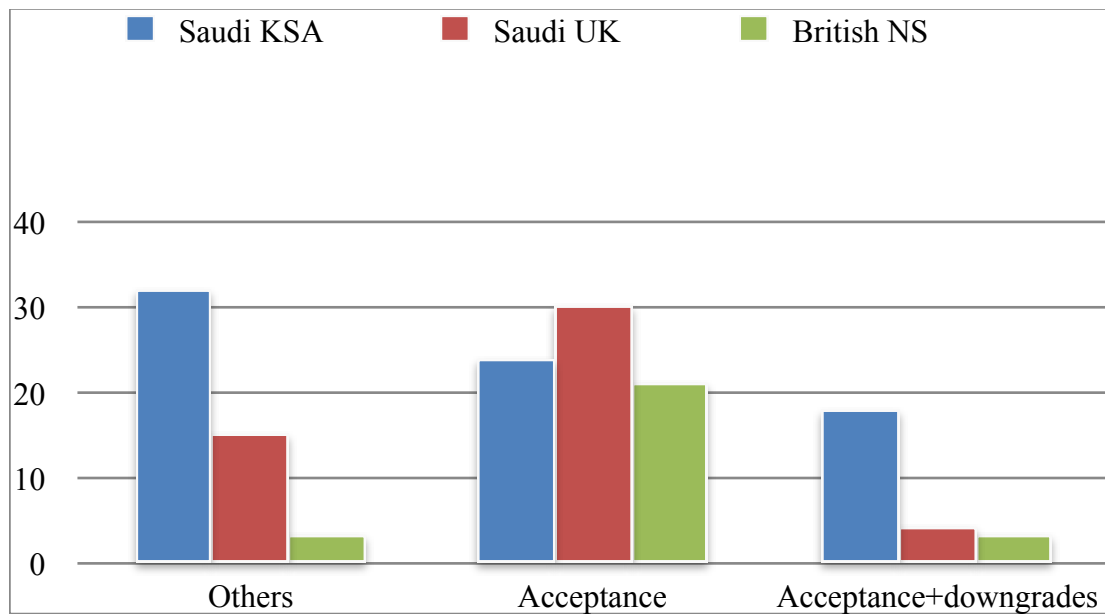


FIGURE 16: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 7

There is a significant difference among the three groups where the p-value is .000253 at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK respondents the p-value is .003884; the result is significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi KSA and British NS the p-value is .000238, the result is significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi UK and British NS, the p-value is .159596, the result is not significant at $p < .05$.

It is notable that the Saudi KSA employed the 'others' strategies the most 28.3% while the Saudi UK used it in 21.8% of cases, and the British NS in only 8.5% of cases. Acceptance tokens were employed the most by British NS 60%, followed by Saudi UK 43.4%, followed by Saudi KSA 21.2%. Acceptance tokens downgrade was found in 15.9%, of the Saudi KSA data only 5.7% in the Saudi UK data, and 8.5% in the British NS data.

In Situation 7, the Saudi UK group acted in a similar way to the British NS. The use of the 'others' strategy was dominant in the Saudi KSA data, while Saudi UK and British NS seemed to favour the acceptance tokens the most. It is also worth noting that while in some other situations, downgrades

were used heavily by the Saudi UK and British NS, it was barely used in this situation by those two groups.

Because the interaction is with a boss, a notable number of promises were employed by the Saudi KSA respondents as in the following examples and these promises were categorised under ‘others’:

- (184) Thank you so much. I won’t disappoint you (Saudi KSA no.2).
- (185) Thanks for the promotion and you will not be regret. (Saudi KSA no.9)
- (186) I would say thank you and i will work harder than before. (Saudi KSA no.69)
- (187) Thank you I’m not going to let you down. (Saudi KSA no.54)
- (188) I tell him thank for the promotion and I promise him that I will not disappoint him.
(Saudi KSA no.8)

Some found it an opportunity to ask for more rewards:

- (189) Why did it take you so long I should be the manager (Saudi KSA no.6)
- (190) When should the company promotion me to be the managar. (Saudi KSA no.7)
[Manager]

Some were keen to be recognised for their effort and get what they deserve (191-195):

- (191) I deserve it because of my hard work. (Saudi KSA no.1)
- (192) Thanks, I think I deserved this promotion, I have worked 10 times harder than everybody
(Saudi KSA no.11).
- (193) Thanks, finally I got what I deserve (Saudi KSA no.16).
- (194) Finally, you recognise my hard work thanks for noticing (Saudi KSA no.23).
- (195) I am very grateful; I know that you will give me a promotion for my hard work. (Saudi
KSA no.45)

There were some interesting examples of accepting the promotion by downgrading it:

- (196) Wow I didn’t see that coming Im surprised and speechless I really appreciate it (with

smiling) (Saudi KSA no.70).

(197) Oh thanks I can't believe it, my pleasure (Saudi KSA no.28).

(198) Thank you for your generosity (Saudi KSA no.48).

(199) This is such an honour thank you so much. (Saudi KSA no.65)

(200) Thank you there is no words than explain my feeling (Saudi KSA no.68) [explain my feelings]

The Saudi UK respondents accepted the compliments gracefully. Fewer made promises than their KSA peers. Getting a promotion seemed to be received as an honour and a gesture of trust:

(201-204)

(201) Thank you so much for this promotion. I am honoured to accept! (Saudi UK no.62)

(202) It an honor (Saudi UK no.45)

(203) Thank you. I appreciate your faith in me (Saudi UK no.43).

(204) I appreciate your trust and I promise I won't disappoint you, thank you so much for trusting me boss! (Saudi UK no.64)

(205) Thank you very much, your confidence in my abilities and work means a great deal to me (Saudi UK no.17).

(206) I really appreciated your trusts and get me raise. I will keep working hard (Saudi UK no.48).

(207) I really appreciate the opportunity and will work hard not to disappoint your trust (Saudi UK no.20).

Some used a range of 'others' responses differently:

(208) I think we need to celebrate! (Saudi UK no.49)

(209) I love you (if she is female) (Saudi UK no.51).

(210) No comment (Saudi UK no.19).

There were many expressions of happiness:

(211) Oh my God! Really? I'm so happy! Thank you for appreciating my work! (Saudi UK no.22)

(212) Thanks, I'm happy you are satisfied with my work! Thank you for being my boss! (Saudi UK no.8)

(213) Wonderful. I'm speechless (Saudi UK no.21).

Throughout the examples found in the British NS data, these respondents rarely made promises and mostly consisted of acceptance tokens that referred to being recognised:

(214) 'That's amazing, thank you, I'm glad that my word is being recognised' (British NS no.19).

(215) great, I accept! I have been working hard and I enjoy working with you. I appreciate your acknowledgement (British NS no.2).

(216) Thank you, I am honoured (British NS no.6).

(217) Thank you, I'm completely delighted (British NS no.14).

Some did not question their work and downgraded this compliment as found in previous situations:

(218) Well, I have worked hard, Thank you for the recognition (British NS no.11).

(219) Hey, that's great! Nice to see that my hard work is rewarded! (British NS no.13)

'Others' strategies occurred in one example in the form of a question:

(220) Awesome thank you. Does it come with a pay rise? What responsibilities will I have- I want to know more detail (British NS no.24).

The British NS data only contained 2 responses that involved promises:

(221) Oh thank you so much, I won't let you down (British NS no.29).

(222) Thank you I really appreciate it and will do my best not to disappoint you (British NS no.30).

In this situation, the overall impression is that receiving a reward had its effect on people's responses. The reward seemed to be important in two respects: it involved recognition and a potential financial reward. While this was true for all three groups, the two Saudi groups differed in their responses: the Saudi UK respondents did not make promises as much as their Saudi KSA peers. They gracefully accepted the recognition and the trust that came with being promoted in a similar way to the British NS respondents.

In most cases, the Saudi UK respondents seemed to have developed a sense of self-worth that made them more able to accept the compliment without having to promise anything in return. In addition, the association of trust, recognition and a reward played its part in this situation because most of the participants felt happy to be recognised; some marked this by the use of the word 'finally' and other marked this by the use of different forms of the verb 'to deserve'.

6.7 Situation 8 (Compliment on achievement from father)

Your father compliments you on your high grades at school, saying: "I'm proud of you, you are the role model to your sisters and brothers". What would you say?

Situation 8	Acceptance	Deflect	Rejection
Saudi KSA	100 88.4%	12 10.6%	1 .8%
Saudi UK	61 88.4%	5 7.2%	3 4.3%
British NS	34 97.1%	1 2.8%	0 0%

TABLE 31 : MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 8

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high among all groups. The chi-square test showed that

there was no significant difference among the groups in terms of their macro strategy use. The p-value is .335218. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

The top three micro strategies are: acceptance tokens, 'others', and agreement.

Situation 8	Acceptance Tokens	Others	Agreement
Saudi KSA	43 38%	38 33.6%	19 16.8%
Saudi UK	12 17.3%	8 11.5%	18 26%
British NS	14 40%	4 11.4%	0 0%

TABLE 32: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 8

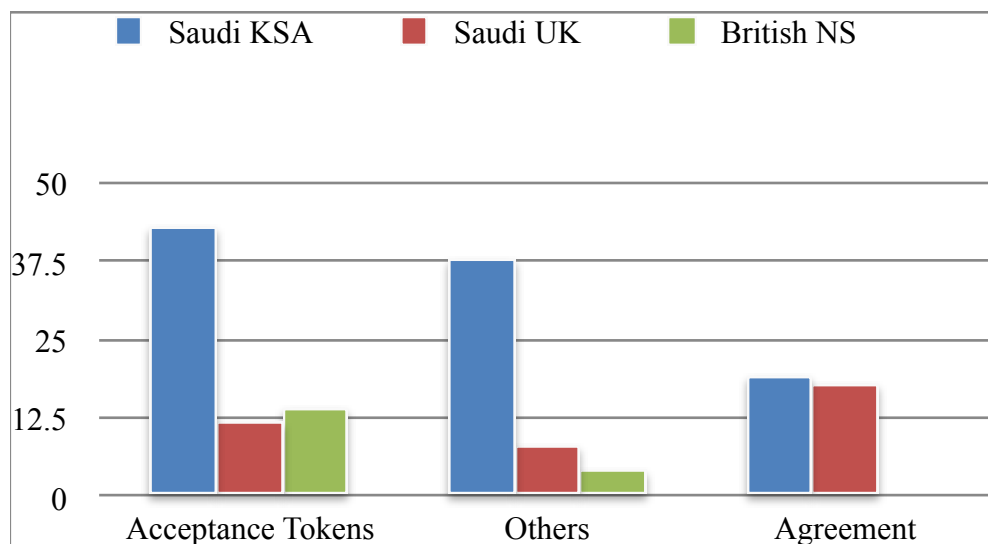


FIGURE 17: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 8

There is a significant difference among the three groups where the p-value is .000347 at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK the p-value is .003121; the result is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi KSA and British NS the p-value is .044371; the result is significant at $p < .05$.

Between Saudi UK and British NS native speaker the p-value is .002938; the result is significant at $p < .05$.

Saudi KSA 38% use of acceptance tokens strategy was far higher than the Saudi UK use of acceptance tokens 17.3% but slightly less than the British NS use 40%. 'others' strategies were used the most by Saudi KSA 33.8% followed by Saudi UK 11.5%, and British NS 11.4%. 16.8% of Saudi KSA responses involved agreement. Compared to 26% of Saudi UK responses; the British NS did not use this micro strategy.

Results of Situation 8 results as well as Situation 5 across groups and even between groups, were significant. Situation 8 prompted a wide variety of responses, as shown in the examples below, beginning with the Saudi KSA data where shifting credit to the father was a common strategy:

(223) Really. Thanks dad and you're my role model (Saudi KSA no.1).

(224) Thank you, father. Its all thanks to you (Saudi KSA no.2).

(225) If it was not you i would not be here (Saudi KSA no.17).

(226) You are the ideal supreme and love you (Saudi KSA no.42).

(227) I think I did my best due to your faith in me and your believes in me (Saudi KSA no.79).

In other responses, making their father proud was important:

(228) Im very happy that I made you proud of me (Saudi KSA no.7).

(229) Thanks, I have studied hard day and night, for this I'm glad I reached your expectations
(Saudi KSA no.11).

(230) Thanks to you my father, also i'm proud of you because I'm sun (Saudi KSA no. 28).

(231) Thanks dad, I will always keep you proud (Saudi KSA no.59).

Reference was also made to making the father 'happy':

(232) Thanks dad, I did my best to make you happy (Saudi KSA no.83).

'Others' strategies included gestures or a preference to not respond or the use of affectionate words, as in the examples below:

(233) I don't know, I think I will smile (Saudi KSA no.55).

(234) Thanks, give me some money (Saudi KSA no.5).

(235) Thanks, with 'hug' (Saudi KSA no.37).

Some used literal translation from L1 as in the following example:

(236) After you of course (Saudi KSA no.49). *This is a ritualistic response to a compliment in Arabic which means something like 'I owe this to you'.*

Saudi UK respondents also showed a tendency towards the use of promises and the word 'proud'.

In this sense responses were similar to those of their Saudi KSA peers, but less intense and diverse.

(237) Thanks daddy, This because of your encouragement (Saudi UK no.6).

(238) Just want to be like u (Saudi UK no.3).

(239) Thanks dad, I'm happy to be an example for my siblings, you are my role model father.
(Saudi UK no.8)

(240) Thanks dad, I will try to maintain this level or better (Saudi UK no.18).

Instances where promises are made are perhaps more tentative, as seen in the repeated use of the word 'try', which does not guarantee the promise made.

In further examples, there is evidence of changing behaviour that could be as a result of being in an immersion environment, as in the examples below where the response involves disagreement:

(241) I'm glad to hear that however I don't feel myself as you described. (Saudi UK no. 65)

(242) I would honestly laugh and say something silly or funny like, oh finally I made someone in this family proud;) (Saudi UK no.64).

(243) Glad to be! Wasn't my intention though (Saudi UK. no.49).

(244) My father was not like this he discouraged me a lot in life and he still does, yet I will probably smile if that ever happened. (Saudi UK no.27)

Some accepted the compliment but made it clear that it felt like pressure on them:

(245) Dad! I am happy you are satisfied but this makes it hard on me (Saudi UK no.40).

(246) Well in reality I'll so embarrassed and I'll tell a joke like yeah I'm the best (Saudi UK no.4).

A similar response was found in the British NS data, for example:

(247) Thanks Dad! But me..a role model?...come on! (British NS no.13)

(248) You may say that, but they have to find their own way, they don't need to put me on a pedestal (British NS no.4).

Some responses used the word 'proud' even in the British NS native speaker data, but this usage was not the most frequent response.

(249) Thanks..I'm honoured' (British NS no.3).

(250) I just want to make you proud. (British NS no.5)

(251) Thanks Dad, I'm glad I've made you proud (British NS no.22).

Some responses agreed to disagree:

- (252) Thanks Dad but I 'm not sure about that! (British NS no.24)
- (253) Thanks! I'm sure they're doing their best, though' (British NS no.19).
- (254) Haha, Thanks, I don't think they see it that way! (British NS no.12)
- (255) Thanks but I'm just me (British NS no.20).

Similar responses were also found in Saudi UK data, particularly with regards to disagreement.

- (256) I wish I would be ok for that (Saudi UK no.13).

Some British NS respondents were also clearly happy to accept the compliment, just as some respondents in the Saudi UK group were:

- (257) Just smile (British NS no.21).
- (258) Thank you, that means a lot (British NS no.6).
- (259) Thanks dad, I love you (British NS no.18).
- (260) Thank you, dad, I'm trying my best (British NS no. 30).

Some Saudi UK respondents made religious references as in the examples below; these were categorised as 'others':

- (261) Thanks to Allah and your dedication dad. If it weren't for Allah blessing me with you, I would have never gotten these grade (Saudi UK no.22).
- (262) Thanks to Allah and then to you (Saudi UK no.39).

In this situation, the ranking of imposition and power (*for Saudis, religious power in this situation*) clearly affect the responses. It seems that the 'father' figure could be problematic for as some as, as although some respondents were happy to accept the father's compliment, others did not accept it gracefully. The influence of culture and religion can be seen clearly in the responses of the two Saudi groups in this situation.

Disagreeing with parents is not welcomed, is discouraged, and certainly not appreciated. In this regard therefore, the responses from the Saudi UK group that involved disagreement was significant and points to a possible tendency towards independence and changed behavior, as a result of their immersion experience.

They had perhaps gone through a journey of self-exploration through being in the UK that changed their perspectives on personal orientation. Although both Saudi groups made promises, the Saudi UK group were much less likely to make long-term promises by comparison with their Saudi KSA peers.

6.8 Situation 9 (Receiving a compliment on ability from a classmate)

You have just finished presenting your research project in class, on your way back to your seat, one of your classmates says to you: "you were great, well done!" What would you say?

Situation 9	Acceptance	Deflection	Rejection
Saudi KSA	110 97.3%	3 2.6%	0 0%
Saudi UK	63 91.3%	5 7.2%	1 1.4%
British NS	32 91.4%	3 8,5%	0 0%

TABLE 33: MACRO-STRATEGIES USED IN SITUATION 9

In this situation, the acceptance rate was high among all groups. The chi-square test did not show any significant difference between the three groups in terms of their macro strategy use (only acceptance and deflect figures were included in the calculation, as so few respondents chose rejection). The p-value is .446008. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

The top three micro strategies in this situation were: acceptance tokens, others and acceptance tokens+ downgrades.

Situation 9	Acceptance Tokens	Others	Acceptance Tokens Downgrades
Saudi KSA	61 53.9%	15 13.2%	9 7.9%
Saudi UK	41 59.4%	3 4.3%	5 7.2%
British NS	12 34.2%	5 14.2%	12 34.2%

TABLE 34: RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGE OF MICRO-STRATEGIES USE IN SITUATION 9

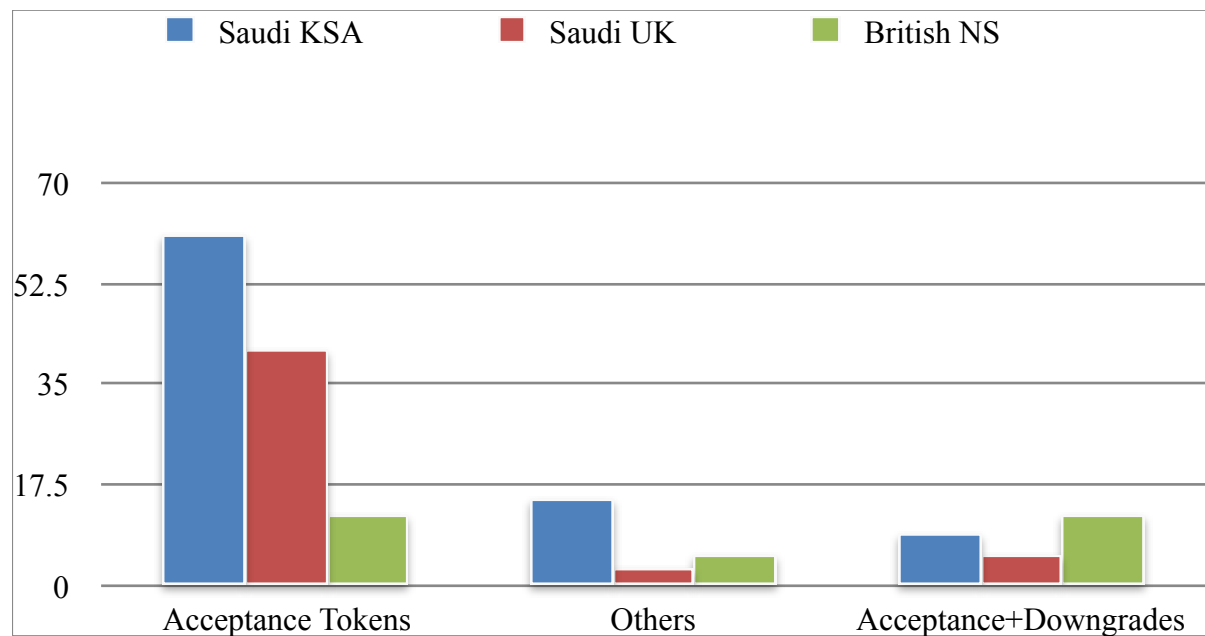


FIGURE 18: DISTRIBUTION OF MICRO-STRATEGIES IN SITUATION 9

There was a significant difference among the three groups where the p-value is the p-value is .
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000181. The result is significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi KSA and Saudi UK, the p-value is the p-value is .160677. The result is not significant at $p < .05$

Between Saudi KSA and British NS, the p-value is .000805. The result is highly significant at $p < .05$. Between Saudi UK and British NS, the p-value is .000522. The result is highly significant at $p < .05$.

Saudi KSA data involved 53.9% of 'acceptance tokens', compared to 59.4%, of the Saudi UK responses and 34.2%. of the British NS responses. Others strategies were employed in 23.20%, responses from the Saudi KSA group compared to Saudi UK 4.3% and British NS native speakers 14.2%. Acceptance tokens

+downgrade was found in 7.9% of the KSA data, 7.2% of the Saudi UK data, and significantly higher percentage of the British NS data 34.2%.

In this situation, British NS were far more likely to use 'acceptance tokens+ downgrade' than either the Saudi KSA or UK groups. The similarity between the two Saudi groups suggests that in this type of situation within this type of relationship and topic, the Saudi UK group had not adapted linguistically to native speaker uses of English. Also, the learning environment in Situation 9 can be the reason behind influencing both Saudi groups to act in a similar way.

Responses below show that Saudi KSA respondents accepted the compliment the most but used various ways to do so; some responses were purely cultural and some religious categorised as 'others'

The 'others' category also contained a number of informal responses.

(263) am better than you (Saudi KSA no.6).

(264) you should take me as an inspair to you (Saudi KSA no.7) [Inspiration]

(265) I KNOW good luck to you idiot (Saudi KSA no.10).

(266) thanks lad (Saudi KSA no.49).

Others accepted the compliment:

(267) Thank you. I'll be shearing for you (Saudi KSA no.2) [Cheering]

(268) I thank him and hope he do well too (Saudi KSA no.8).

A religious reference +shift credit was found in one example:

(269) thank you, this is from my god and after that your help (Saudi KSA no.30).

One participant used one word which literally means 'thank God' but can also be said after working hard and hoping for the best, like a sigh of relief:

(270) alhamdlh.. (Saudi KSA no. 37).

Unlike in previous situations, some participants found it easy to downgrade in this situation:

(271) thanks i was very nervous (Saudi KSA no.57).

(272) thank you i was very shy (Saudi KSA no.66).

(273)Thanks, that means a lot to me because i thought i did a bad job good luck for you there too
(Saudi KSA no.11).

One chose a humble response:

(274) i will smile and look at him/her and say thank you (Saudi KSA no. 70).

One wanted some reassurance from his/her peer:

(275) thanks, that was very nerve wrecking. do you really think i did well? (Saudi KSA no.62).

Many of the Saudi UK respondents also used acceptance tokens, sometimes combined with another strategy like downgrading:

(276) Thanx I was so nervous (Saudi UK no.4) [nervous]

(277)Thanks, You think so? thought I was a little bit all over the place, but I'm happy you think
that (Saudi UK no.8).

(278) Thanks. it was a great effort actually (Saudi UK no. 13).

(279) Oh really? Thank you, I was so anxious about it (Saudi UK.no.33).

(280) Thank you I hope it was clear (Saudi UK no.20).

Similar acceptance +downgrading responses were found in the British NS data:

(280) Really? I was no nervous. Thank you! (British NS no.2).

(281) Oh I thought it was crap, but thanks anyway. I think I'm improving (British NS no.3).

(282) Thanks! I was really nervous, but I think it went well (British NS no.16).

One participant wanted some reassurance from his/her peer:

(283) Oh, good. Did it make sense? (British NS no.20).

Saudi UK respondents reported that they would use gestures, something that British NS respondents mentioned too:

(284) Thank you! (Whispering) (Saudi UK no.16)

(285) thank you with big smile (Saudi UK no.50).

(286) (I would just smile or chuckle) (Saudi UK 40).

British NS respondents also referred to the use of gestures; gestures were part of responses in previous situations and indeed, seemed to be a key way to respond to a compliment among British NS:

(287) Thank you (with a smile of satisfaction) (British NS no.11)

(288) Thanks (plus an embarrassed shrug?) (British NS no.34) [embarrassed]

The data suggests that lack of social distance affected the response in this situation. Saudi KSA used friendly responses and jokes, while Saudi UK and British NS used similar downgrading strategies.

There was no significant difference between the two Saudi groups. The reason for that could be the

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environment in which the situation took place. It seemed that regardless of whether the Saudi students are learning in the UK or not, within a learning environment, they tend to act in a similar way. A similar inference was made about

Situation 5 which suggested that the reason could also be their passive knowledge of formal language and certain rules based on foreign language teaching textbooks. Some grammar rules are memorised from those textbooks which typically base their examples on situations similar to situation 9 to explain English grammar rules. One last point to make is that whenever there is a significant difference between the Saudi KSA and British NS groups and a significant difference between the Saudi UK and British NS groups, there is no significant difference between the two Saudi groups. This can be seen in situations where compliments from friends or classmates, specifically, Situations 2,5 and 9.

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis – both quantitative and qualitative - have been presented. The aim was to investigate the responses in depth. Even in those cases in which no significant difference was found at a macro level, most revealed differences at a micro level. It became clear that in order to answer the research questions of this project analysing micro strategies was the key. It was also at a micro-level that interesting observations emerged that revealed differences between the two Saudi groups when compared to the British NS group in some situations and differences between the two Saudi groups in other situations. It also helped to shed some light on the possible effect of being in an immersion environment as a potential explanation for differences in the responses of the two Saudi groups. The next chapter discusses these findings in the light of the published literature.

Chapter Seven: Compliment Responses: Discussion of the Results

7.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by identifying two major themes that emerged from the classification of the 9 situations of compliment responses, namely, cultural adaptation and resistance to cultural adaptation. Resistance, in this context, implies conscious decision of strongly holding on cultural values. During the qualitative analysis, specific differences were identified between the responses made by the KSA students when compared to those who had undergone a period of immersion in the UK. These comparisons form the basis for the discussions in sections 7.2 and 7.3.

Within each of these major themes (cultural adaptation and resistance to cultural adaptation), two sub-themes (responses to compliments on abilities and responses to compliments on possessions) are discussed in terms of the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study: politeness theory; Leech's politeness principles; intercultural communication and finally Spencer-Oatey's rapport-management model. Finally, the situations are discussed in relation to cultural and social norms.

7.2 Cultural adaptation

The first major theme to arise from analysis of the data is cultural adaptation, as reflected in compliments made about abilities and possessions.

7.2.1 Cultural adaptation and compliment on abilities

Cultural adaptation in making compliments about abilities was found in Situations 1,7 and 8. While the theme was identified as significant in all three situations, Situation 8 was a special case and will be discussed separately.

The analysis shows that the respondents used 4 compliment response strategies taken from Holmes' taxonomy (1986), and one undefined strategy which was labelled 'others' (see section 4.9.15). The results could be explained in terms of imposition, which is known to influence the use of politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987, Scollon and Scollon 2001). The tables below compare how those strategies were used by respondents in the 3 situations.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
1	54.8%	39.1%	57.1%
7	21.2%	43.4%	30.4%
8	38%	17.3%	40%

TABLE 35: ACCEPTANCE TOKEN RATES AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 1,7AND 8

The table above shows that British NS preferred acceptance tokens in Situations 1 and 8, Acceptance rates were most popular among Saudi KSA in Situation 1 while Saudi UK employed acceptance tokens in Situation 7 the most. Table 35 shows a pattern of resistance to adaptation in Situation 1 among the Saudi UK students: the Saudi KSA rates of acceptance are much closer to British NS than those of the Saudi UK group.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
1	13.2%	21.7%	14.2%
7	0%	0%	0%
8	16.8%	26%	0%

TABLE 36: AGREEMENT RATES AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 1,7AND 8

The table above shows that in Situations 1 and 8, the Saudi UK group preferred agreement the most. The British NS group, on the other hand, preferred agreement in Situation 1. Saudi KSA preferred agreement in Situation 8.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
1	13.2%	26%	11.4%
7	0%	0%	0%
8	0%	0%	0%

TABLE 37: ACCEPTANCE TOKENS +AGREEMENT RATES AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 1,7AND 8

The table above shows that Saudi UK speakers preferred acceptance tokens and an agreement strategy more than the other two groups in Situation 1, whereas this strategy was not used in Situations 7 and 8.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
1	0%	0%	0%
7	15.9%	5.7%	8.5%
8	0%	0%	0%

TABLE 38: ACCEPTANCE TOKENS+ DOWNGRADE AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 1,7AND 8

The table above shows that Saudi KSA respondents employed acceptance tokens + downgrade strategy more than the other two groups in Situation 7. This strategy was not used in Situations 1 and 8.

Situation	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
1	0%	0%	0%
7	28.3%	21.7%	8.5%
8	33.6%	11.5%	11.4%

TABLE 39: ‘OTHERS’ STRATEGY RATES AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 1,7AND 8

The table above shows that Saudi KSA preferred ‘others’ strategy the most in Situation 7 and 8 while Saudi UK preferred using the strategy in Situation 7 more than 8. British NS used ‘others’ strategy to some degree in Situations 7 and 8.

7.2.1.1 Situation 1

You invited your friends over to dinner. After they finish, one of them says to you: "the food was wonderful!" What would you say?

In this situation, acceptance dominated the responses from all 3 groups. Although the situation did not show any significant differences in terms of their macro uses, their micro acceptance responses varied, particularly between the two Saudi groups.

In terms of Brown and Levinson's theory (1987), the Saudi KSA respondents used positive politeness strategies by attending to the need of the hearer or exaggerating their interest. In positive politeness, there are three main strategies: claim common ground with the hearer; intensify interests to hearer; and seek agreement with hearer (Brown and Levinson 1987:103). Saudi UK respondents accepted and agreed as positive politeness strategies but also tried to deflect and give information, which is a form of negative politeness strategy: e.g., 'it is vegan'.

Invitations are positive politeness strategies and are expected in symmetrical relationships according to a solidarity face system. Exaggerating and offering the recipe are positive politeness strategies. Both were found in the Saudi KSA data, while acceptance without the offer of more food or an invitation was relatively less frequent in the Saudi UK responses. Expressing one's feelings towards the occasion or downgrading the compliments were found in both Saudi UK and British NS responses. There was no power and no distance, because the speakers are of equal status and there was no use of negative politeness strategies because of the lack of imposition.

Leech's politeness principles provide an explanation for the speaker's reactions in this situation, in that modesty and generosity principles dominated. Generosity was to be the most favoured principle among Saudi KSA respondents, while Saudi UK and British NS respondents favoured the modesty principle. In one example, the Saudi KSA responded 'Its nothing for you', which can be classified under the generosity principle because it maximised the benefits to others and minimised benefits to

self (Leech 2005). This phrase is a literal translation from the Arabic, meaning ‘the food cooked is not enough to show how important it is to have you in the house’. In other words, ‘I’d do anything for you, the food is but a very small token of my esteem’. In Saudi Arabia, this is a way to humble oneself and show generosity. It is a formulaic expression, an Arabic ready-made form that can be used on such occasions. This clear example of cultural reference is evidence of pragmatic transfer in the Saudi KSA data. Saudi UK seemed to favour modesty politeness principles over generosity, which is a means to avoid boasting about oneself and They viewed modesty differently from Saudi KSA, as shown in their tendency towards downgrading whilst using acceptance without accompanying invitations or offers. For example, a Saudi UK respondent accepted the compliment but preferred not to take all the credit by saying: ‘Thank you, it’s my mother’s recipe’.

This lack of offering was evident in the Saudi UK group responses most of the time, perhaps they did not feel the need to offer food or reciprocate the compliment as much as their Saudi KSA peers. All respondents used positive politeness strategies but chose different types. For example, Saudi UK respondents used positive politeness, and seeking of agreement over intensifying or claiming common ground, unlike their peers in Saudi KSA. They both agreed and accepted compliments but had different perspectives on the situation.

One respondent used an Arabic proverb to respond to the compliment on food:

Thank you for coming. You know what they say food is better when you eat it with someone (Saudi KSA no.4).

This is a clear example of claiming common ground and even intensifying being polite by telling a famous saying. In addition, this is evidence of pragmatic transfer of L1, as discussed in a study by Kasper (1992): ‘Arabic used literal translation expressions of gratitude’ (p.215).

It is also noticeable in the Saudi KSA responses that the generosity and modesty principles were important to them: they tried to maximise the benefit to other and minimise the benefits to self.

Saudi UK and British NS by contract favoured the modesty and agreement principles more. Below are illustrative examples:

‘Thanks coz it was a complement’ (Saudi UK no.50). ‘Thank you, I enjoyed cooking it’ (British NS no.6).

In this situation, what seems to underlie the difference between the Saudi groups is their view of sociality rights and expectations. The examples above show how Saudi UK and British NS expressed their feelings towards the situation, while Saudi KSA respondents were more concerned about others. This difference can be explained in terms of rapport-management theory (Spencer-Oatey, 2008): simply stating that all respondents used positive politeness strategies is not enough to specify the difference or to explain the difference found in their micro strategies. Spencer-Oatey (2009) links Leech’s principles (2005), as influential factors that affect strategy use, with rapport-management. Socio-pragmatic principles and pragma-linguistic principles were the reasons behind the choices in this situation. From a socio-pragmatic point of view, the difference between the two learner groups was that the Saudi KSA respondents used rapport enhancing strategies while the Saudi UK respondents maintained rapport but did not enhance it. This illustrates how Saudi KSA used the generosity and modesty principles rather than the agreement principle and confirms that socio-pragmatics principles can affect the strategies used in particular ways.

Pragma-linguistically, the Saudi KSA group tended to employ literal translations of Saudi politeness formulae. The Saudi KSA respondents’ concern for association rights was more prevalent in their responses, while the Saudi UK respondents preferred equity rights. These rights were shown in the type of positive politeness strategy used. Thus, both factors seemed to affect their choices, their face

orientation and socio-pragmatic conventions. Because there is no power or distance, perhaps the Saudi UK respondents felt that there was no need to exaggerate their interest or enhance rapport. They used positive politeness strategies as outlined by Scollon and Scollon (2011) but did not aim to enhance rapport. For example, in the Saudi KSA data, positive politeness strategies included jokes, in-group markers and intimate names (e.g. my friend, my dear, my sweetheart). In the Saudi UK data, positive politeness strategies included acceptance tokens and agreement, much like the ones found in the British NS data.

Scollon and Scollon (2001) discuss the concept of stereotyping in intercultural communication and how it can lead to miscommunication (see section 3.2.5). There is a widespread stereotype according to which people from the Middle East (Arabs) love to offer more food on occasions. The general assumption within this stereotype, from the perspective of Western cultures such as the UK, is that it is a negative cultural feature since offering more food, even when the recipient has refused the offer more than once, is annoying. In politeness theory, offering is considered a positive strategy and in Leech's principle of politeness it is classified under the generosity principle. For some Westerners, refusing an offer is a FTA and, therefore, continuing to offer more food even though it has been refused, puts the hearer in the difficult position of having to offend the person who is making the offer. In Arabic-speaking countries by contrast, refusal is ritualistic and not strongly felt as a rejection of the offer.

Scollon and Scollon (2001:272) warn against stereotyping as a way of thinking that does not acknowledge internal differences within a group. It is an overgeneralisation that anyone who has a Middle Eastern background will always offer more food to their guests. It is clear from the results of this situation, not all people from Saudi Arabia or Westerners will react to the subject of food similarly. It is also an overgeneralisation to expect that all Saudi UK respondents will behave more like the British respondents. Human behaviour is complex and just because the Saudi UK group

have resided in the UK for some time does not necessarily change or influence all their social behaviours. Change happens gradually sometimes and affects entirely or partially some social habits or cultural values. Nonetheless, tables above clearly show how the Saudi UK group have changed their behaviour in comparison to their KSA peers: the qualitative analysis reveals a degree of cultural adaptation among the Saudi UK respondents. On the other hand, stereotyping can be a barrier to recognising similarities between culturally different groups, such as the Saudi KSA and British NS. For example, one British respondent used the same wording as that offered by a Saudi KSA. There is more of an orientation to negative face in the British response (my desire not to be impeded and saving his or her own negative face) and positive face in the KSA response (I esteem you). The possible reasons for this are twofold: The immersion experience could be that the Saudi UK respondents did not offer more food to their guests. Yet the examples of the two Saudi groups also showed internal differences, which goes against the stereotyping of Arabic speakers.

Transferability of expressions depends on both universal and specific knowledge. Offering food or invitations is not universal in this case, and thus it is language-specific (Kasper, 1992:217). Taguchi (2011) supports the argument that lack of knowledge is a main cause for the occurrence of negative pragmatic transfer (L1 interference and literal translations). This was evident in the way which Saudi KSA showed a pragmatic transfer from their L1 and is regarded can be seen as a negative transfer due to arising from their lack of universal and language-specific knowledge. Saudi UK used their immersion experience to avoid it in this situation. Table 19 shows the similarities between Saudi KSA and British NS in terms of strategy use, but the qualitative analysis shows similarities between Saudi UK and British NS in terms of content or wording of the strategy.

In the next section, the discussion moves to Situation 7, which features the same general theme but has different characteristics.

7.2.1.2 Situation 7

Your boss tells you that she is giving you a promotion for all the hard work you have done.

What would you say?

Situation 1 and 7 differ in terms of the rates of acceptance and deflection. In Situation 7, the characteristics were: power, specifically rewarding power, distance in the boss-employer relationship and rank of imposition. These characteristics could influence the choices made and explain the reasons for the high rate of acceptance and the lower rate of deflection. Based on Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) of politeness (see chapter 2), expressing happiness, interest and approval, telling jokes or making promises are forms of positive politeness. Using a principle-based approach, Leech (2005, 2016) proposed that agreement and promises are positive acts and can be described as observing the principle of approbation and agreement, so it seems that Saudi KSA respondents were enhancing rapport (Spencer-Oatey, 2008) when responding to compliments by using promises or expressing their happiness. This is because avoiding disagreement is a positive politeness strategy and, as such, enhances rapport.

The chi-square results of the Saudi KSA respondents compared to the British NS respondents were significantly different, which could be a result of the power and ranking imposition in this situation. Moreover, the Saudi UK respondents differed from their KSA peers in Situation 7 and showed similarities with the British NS group (see section 6.8).

According to Mourad (2019), English speakers value intimacy and privacy while Arabs accept imposition, because Arabs tend to exaggerate the status of religious leaders and people in authoritative positions, due to different social beliefs about power (see 3.2.6.2). Salameh (2001) reported, however, that in his study the higher the complimenter's social status, the more frequently both Americans and Saudi Arabic speakers deflected.

On receiving a compliment about work performance, for example, the addressee may feel pressured to make a promise to continue to perform well based on the received compliment, which makes a compliment potentially face-threatening. Promises were made more by Saudis KSA which is a positive strategy to establish involvement and approval. In addition, negative politeness strategies were used in both situations (others and downgrade) more by the Saudi KSA respondents than the other two groups. It seems that their negative face was threatened and therefore some respondents employed negative politeness strategies. There were examples of giving deference and minimising the imposition of the dealing with a boss. These strategies were used in Situation 7. From the above discussion, it seems that the imposition of dealing with a boss affected Saudi KSA in this situation, resulting in a mixed use of positive and negative politeness strategies. Factors that influence choosing to enhance or challenge rapport are various. The reasons can be personal or culture-related; social or psychological. They are described below

The intercultural communication model of Scollon and Scollon (2001) and the rapport-management model of Spencer-Oatey (2008) propose that certain factors can influence politeness strategies. (see chapter 2, sections 2.5 and 2.6). Scollon and Scollon (2001) cite involvement and independence as two concepts that can be usefully applied in intercultural communication. It seems that Saudi KSA respondents were trying to show involvement in Situation 7 and they tried to enhance rapport. Both Saudi UK and Saudi KSA respondents used the 'others' category most in terms of percentage, while Saudi UK and British NS respondents both used downgrading and acceptance strategies.

It seems that the Saudi UK in this situation learned to use downgrades and acceptance strategies and to signal their independence. This could explain why the results were significant difference between the group of Saudis and British NS but not between the Saudi UK and British NS groups. It also seems clear that the Saudi UK respondents were less inclined to diminish their own credit or

downgrade their achievement, when compared to their KSA peers.

Saudis in the UK did, however, use similar strategies to the British NS group and it became clear that there was level more advanced indicated by their usage of more colloquial terms, which is evidence that being in an immersion environment has a positive effect. Some of the Saudi UK responses indicated a level of self-awareness. This could be due to the wording of the question: there was no indication of the receiver of the compliment being a 'non-Arabic' speaker but Saudi UK respondents seemed to understand implicitly, although It was mentioned in the instructions. Saudi KSA either did not use their meta-pragmatic awareness or their level of English was not advanced which was different from Saudi UK respondents. In addition, Saudi KSA may acted based on their social norms, regardless of this being an intercultural exchange. The critical concept in this situation for respondents was likely to be recognised as performance, which affected the nature of responses found. As Saudi UK respondents developed new self-awareness, as a result of being in an immersion environment, their reaction to compliments on performance developed, too.

7.2.1.3 Situation 8

Your father compliments you on your high grades at school, saying: "I'm proud of you, you are the role model to your sisters and brothers". What would you say?

Responses to Situation 8 showed significant differences between the groups, although the same overall strategies were used. The three groups used two strategies from Holmes' taxonomy and one undefined strategy that I refer to as 'others'.

According to politeness theory, the use of acceptance tokens and agreement are forms of positive politeness. However, the use of 'others' strategy is believed to be due to the imposition in this situation.

According to face systems (Scollon and Scollon, 2001), the variables were as follows: the power is (+), distance is (-), and ranking of imposition is high. Despite the power imbalance in the father-daughter/son relation, the social distance is low because of the intimate relationship. However, this situation was impostional because of the influential powers, socially and religiously, upon the respondent (e.g. reward power and legitimate power) for Saudi respondents. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this father-daughter/son relationship is referred to as a hierarchy and individuals (respondents) are expected to avoid FTAs, to perform them off-record or to compensate by means of negative-politeness strategies. (see sections 2.5 and section 4.9.13). The respondents' use of promise and agreement can be considered as acts of involvement strategies, while deference and disagreement are independence strategies. The reason behind this is that although it is a hierarchical relationship, the ranking depends on the context. In Situation 8, the context is intimate between a father and a son/daughter, and this explains why the use of negative strategies like deflecting the compliment by shifting credits can be seen as a positive act and a form of respect due to social and religious beliefs. This can reflect power, too. Power in sociolinguistic research typically refers to inequality and acceptance of unequal role relationships (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:31).

Spencer-Oatey (2008) identifies reward power, coercive power, expert power, legitimate power and referent power. These types of power function differently and each type can stand alone or be combined. An example of reward power is when a person is obliged to do good to their parent and make them happy because of a religious belief that Allah will reward this person in their life and in their afterlife for this kindness.

Kindness and submission to parents, regardless of whether people choose to practise them, is both a religious and a social duty which cannot be questioned by Saudi people, or any Muslim. According to Islamic beliefs:

1. In four of the Suras of the Glorious Qur'an, to be a true Muslim is to respect one's parents.
2. If either or both parents are not good, Islam believes that respect is still due.
3. The consent of parents is regarded as the consent of Allah.

The above-mentioned powers can normally be found together. In Situation 8, it came as no surprise then that the power of parental approval and happiness is crucial. In a similar study, Salameh (2001) emphasised that these acts show 'how central religion is in [participants'] responses to compliments which refer to religious duty, abidance by Islamic teachings, or an attempt to attain God's contentment' (p.143). Compliment studies in other Muslim communities such as Persian and Indonesian also confirmed the important role of religion and the effect it has on social norms (sections 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.6.3).

The second type of power that parents have is so-called referent power. Children strive to be like their parent in some respect. This is in many ways a universal practice but found largely in Muslim communities because of its obvious link to reward power. The link between the two types of power can be found when children imitate their parents as a form of love and respect. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, many sons and daughters decide to follow their parents' career goals in order to make their parents proud and happy. Sometimes, sons and daughters share the same interests as their parents, but this is not always the case. It is widely accepted that job or study choices are made in order to fulfil one's parents' dream or wish. For example, in Saudi Arabia, if one is a physician, one can expect one's son or daughter to major in medicine as well.

Normally, if the son or daughter has the required grades, they will do that because it is commonly seen as a way to honour one's parents and make them proud. This is equally the case when the parent has a trade or craft or is in business. Although in Western countries, too, children may follow in their parents' footsteps, the notion of honouring one's parents and making them proud is arguably stronger in Saudi culture. In his study, Salameh (2001) found that the Saudi EFL students seemed to express their closeness and loyalty to family members in the way that they responded to compliments in English. This is in line with the concept of kinship in East Asian countries, which is extremely powerful (Scollon, and Scollon, 2001: 61). Some view this concept as a barrier to individual self-realisation and progress but, whether upheld or rejected by some people in these countries, it is still a central cultural value. As Scollon and Scollon (2001: 62) point out, 'A son's primary motivation for action is thought to be to bring credit to his parents and to provide security for his own descendants'. In these societies, individuals are aware of their obligations towards those who come before them or will come after them. Relationships can be intimately hierarchical, and one learns to show respect to those above and be considerate to one's family's expectations and one's duties to them.

Psychological and personal factors also play a role in managing rapport. The use of different strategies in social research is explained by identifying different personality types. According to Communication Accommodation Theory (Gallois and Giles, 2015), for example, there are two types of orientations: intergroup orientation, where people tend to act in the interests of the intergroup terms and opt to maintain agreement; and interpersonal orientation, where people tend to act in interpersonal terms and opt to act freely. In the current situation, it seems that the group of Saudis are intergroup oriented, while the second group of Saudis are divided between intergroup and interpersonal oriented. Personal orientation is also one of the factors that can influence rapport-management (Spencer-Oatey, 2008).

People who are intergroup-oriented are motivated to enhance rapport in order to win a reward, which specifically can be explained in terms of seeking religious rewards, for example, the reward of God's forgiveness and mercy upon behaving in a good manner towards one's parent.

Interpersonal-oriented people, on the other hand, are motivated to challenge rapport because they want to assert their personal independence (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:33).

7.2.1.4 Summary

Although the acceptance strategy was favoured by all three groups of respondents, there appears to be a tendency for Saudi UK respondents to behave differently from their KSA peers. Saudi KSA respondents made promises more frequently than Saudi UK respondents. In situations of intimacy, Saudi KSA respondents seemed to focus on enhancing rapport. In situations in which power was not strong, the Saudi UK respondents did not follow the expected Saudi norms in terms of conforming to their expectations of their sociality rights, because their association and equity needs override their social obligations i.e. generosity vs. modesty. Saudi UK respondents did not pay as much attention to the topic or the 'social distance as their peers in KSA. This was evidenced in the more frequent use of downgrading and 'others' strategies in the KSA group: some situations seemed to affect the Saudi KSA respondents more than the Saudi UK respondents, causing Saudi KSA to use negative politeness strategies. Saudi UK respondents' use of downgrading was similar to the British NS group, where downgrading is more common.

7.2.2 Cultural adaptation and possession

Possession of a luxurious item (watch) (self-esteem need) Situation 3

Ownership of a house (biological and psychological needs) + (self-esteem need) Situation 4

Although both situations 3 and 4 involve possessions in general may seem similar, but there are two significant differences between them. The first concerns the social distance between the complimenter and the complimentee and the type of ownership.

In Situation 3, the compliment came from a stranger and referred to a materialistic item (watch) in an informal setting (party), while the compliment in Situation 4 came from a colleague about a basic human need (house, shelter) while being inside the place itself. These different settings are likely to affect the response in terms of cultural attitudes towards possessions. Secondly, the distance between the speakers is different and this will also affect the response.

The tables below show the politeness strategies used in the two situations. The topic did not appear to be a factor because in both situations, the Saudis KSA responses were significantly different from those of their peers in the UK. The responses of the Saudi UK, however, were significantly different from the British NS upon receiving a compliment from a stranger about a watch. At the same time, there are similarities with the British NS group in their preference for downgrading, mostly when responding to the compliment about the house.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
3	30.9%	60.8%	31.4%
4	32.7%	56.5%	62.8%

TABLE 40: ACCEPTANCE TOKENS STRATEGY RATES AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 3 AND 4.

In the above table, Saudi UK used acceptance tokens the most in Situation 3, while British NS used it the most in Situation 4.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
3	15.9%	7.2%	0%
4	0%	0%	0%

TABLE 41: ACCEPTANCE TOKENS + RETURN COMPLIMENT STRATEGY RATES AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 3 AND 4.

This table shows that Saudi KSA used acceptance tokens + return compliment the most in Situation 3.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
3	15%	14.4%	48.5%
4	18.5%	8.6%	0%

TABLE 42: ACCEPTANCE TOKENS+ INFORMATION COMMENTS STRATEGY RATES IN SITUATIONS 3 AND 4.

In the above table, Saudi KSA used Acceptance tokens+ information comments the most in Situation 4. British NS used the strategy the most in Situation 3.

Situations	Saudi KSA	Saudi UK	British NS
3	0%	0%	0%
4	17.6%	4.3%	2.8%

TABLE 43: ‘OTHERS’ STRATEGY RATES AMONG RESPONDENTS IN SITUATIONS 3 AND 4.

Table 43 shows that Saudi KSA respondents used the ‘others’ strategy the most in Situation 4.

Compliments on possession seemed to be largely accepted by all groups with some minor differences.

For example, in Situation 4, returning the compliment strategy was not used because of the nature of the topic and in Situation 3 no one used the ‘others’ category, unlike in Situation 4.

The result shows that both Saudi UK and Saudi KSA respondents’ preferences in terms of using the three micro strategies were the same but they employed the strategies differently. In Situations 3 and 4, Saudi UK respondents tended towards behaving in a similar way to the British NS.

7.2.2.1 Situation 3 (Receiving a compliment on possession from a stranger)

You are at a party: you are introduced to someone you have not met before, who says, “I love your watch”. What would you say?

In Situation 3, responses across the groups were not significantly different at the macro level but there were significant differences at the micro level. Saudi KSA respondents accepted and returned compliments more than their peers in the UK, who preferred acceptance but were not enthusiastic to exchange information or return compliments. It is possible that Saudi UK respondents either felt an imposition or had been influenced by being in an immersion environment. The relationship is deferential, the social distance does not essentially narrow down in contexts such as a party. This also may explain why the Saudi KSA respondents returned the compliments, because they felt they were being imposed upon and needed to show modesty: some Saudi KSA respondents offered the item, which suggests an occurrence of imposition – they felt obliged to give the watch to the complimenter. The existence of imposition on the Saudi KSA respondents obliged them to use a deflection strategy by returning the compliment and giving extra information (see section 3.2.6).

In terms of Leech’s principles of politeness, approbation, which maximises benefits to other and minimises cost to others, was found in this situation (e.g., returning compliments and giving information). The modesty principle did not occur often because the respondents talked about the value of their possession. Saudi KSA, however, also employed and valued the generosity principle

by offering the items and information about the item. Saudi UK respondents favoured the agreement principle but did not praise themselves or others, which suggests a lack of interest to enhance rapport. They seemed to value their independence more than involvement. In addition, the modesty principle, achieved by self-deprecation, was found in the Saudi UK and British NS responses. Although all respondents accepted the compliment, their strategies were different, suggesting they had different goals in this interaction with a stranger.

Modesty and generosity seem to play a central role in this situation. There appears to be a change in the behaviour of the Saudi UK respondents in terms of refraining from offering the items (see also Situation 2), and in terms of returning compliments. As stated above, in Saudi Arabia it is common knowledge that when something is offered, it is not a genuine offer and therefore should not be accepted. This could be explained by Leech's Tact Principle whereby benefit to others is maximised and the focus is shifted from self to the item, as noted in previous studies (Salameh, 2001, Alamro, 2013).

Scollon and Scollon (2001) categorised this type of situation as deference. Because the interaction is with a stranger, it seems to be of a sensitive nature, as the imposition of dealing with a stranger is problematic whether one uses positive or negative politeness strategies. From Spencer-Oatey's perspective (2008), the situation touched on face sensitivities because some of the Saudi KSA respondents offered items and complimented in return, whereas the Saudi UK respondents did not seem to feel the need to harmonise with a stranger and the British respondents talked about the value of the watch. All responses are interesting in terms of touching on face sensitivities and either their desire to be liked or left alone. There was no social obligation in this situation, but the speaker might have had interactional goals in mind. For example, the Saudi KSA respondents used this situation to start a phatic conversation while Saudi UK and British NSs did not.

Complimenting can be a way in to initiating phatic talk and introducing oneself in various contexts. In Middle Eastern countries in particular, small talk is appreciated. Compliments can strengthen a relationship, provided they are not interpreted as flattery (i.e. insincere). In this regard, the Saudi UK and British NS respondents did not appear to feel the need to strengthen the relationship. It also seems that while Saudi UK respondents tended to neglect rapport, the Saudi KSA respondents tried to enhance it. The British NS group also tended to ignore rapport and provide information instead of rapport. (e.g. information comment strategy in Situation 3 but not in Situation 4)

The context of the compliment affected the situation because of the influential factors on the strategies identified by Spencer-Oatey (2008). One Saudi KSA respondent suggested that he would say to the stranger that the watch was a gift, so 'he does not have to offer it to them'. First, for a non-Arab there would not be any imposition or feelings of obligation to give away the watch that has been complimented on. For the Saudi KSA respondent, like most other Saudis, this response was rooted in their cultural background.

Mentioning that the watch is a gift by some respondents in all the three different groups may suggest that the complimentees felt imposed on and had to pretend that it was a gift. Saudi respondents used this strategy more, perhaps because of the cultural taboo around offering an item that one has received as a gift. British NS respondents used this strategy less perhaps because it is not customary to feel obliged to give the object of a compliment to the complimenter in the UK. On the contrary, the complimenter would be deeply embarrassed if s/he thought that this was an expectation.

While the context of Situation 3 was relaxed, the compliment was still unwelcomed to some respondents. Complimenting on a stranger's watch could be considered an invasion of personal space. In the reverse situation in which respondents were asked to offer a compliment in the same context, British NS respondents mostly refrained from giving a compliment; as one respondent

commented that doing so would be ‘too forward’ (see chapter 5 section 5.2.3). Some respondents felt the need to share a story about the watch, even with a stranger. This suggests that compliments on possession can have a positive effect on people as it creates the opportunity to share information about it or initiate a phatic conversation which is one of the functions of giving a compliment. Saudi KSA respondents seemed to use compliments as a way of initiating a conversation with a stranger but the Saudi UK respondents did not and seemed to adopt a more formal approach. This was also evident in Situation 2, in which the compliment is given to a close friend. Saudi UK respondents avoided phatic conversations and appeared to be more focused on maintaining rapport rather than enhancing it. Similarly, in this situation they appeared to neglect rapport while their KSA peers tended to enhance it. Perhaps their new understanding of how compliments function in the immersion environment affected their judgement, leading them to behave differently. In addition, as has been discussed previously, the Saudi UK respondents seemed to be more aware of the implications of the fact that the imaginary person in the situations was a non-Arabic speaker. While Saudi KSA did not report having a different understanding, nonetheless it may have had an influence. Saudi KSA respondents showed a preference for developing conversations (e.g., self-introduction) when they received compliments from friends or strangers about their possessions. Saudi UK respondents preferred to keep the exchange formal and did not engage. British NS respondents did not prefer developing conversations and tended instead to give information about the possession complimented on or simply accept the compliment.

7.2.2.2 Similarity with Situation 2

In Situation 2 (discussed in 7.3.2.1) which, unlike situation 3, involved a friend, British NS respondents used the same strategy of either accepting the compliment or giving information. Saudi UK respondents, unlike their KSA peers, did not return the compliment and tended simply to accept the compliment while Saudi KSA respondents accepted, gave information and sometimes returned

compliments in both situations 2 and 3.

Overall, it would seem that compliments about possessions, whether to a stranger or close friend, were dealt with similarly by British NS and Saudi UK respondents. It may be that the Saudi UK respondents did not perceive the compliment as a request because the influence of L1 norms has decreased due to their immersion experience. The only difference between Situations 2 and 3 is that the results between Saudi UK and Saudi KSA were not significant. While there was no power in that the relationship in both situations was symmetrical, the two Saudi groups used different strategies; although this did not yield significant differences in terms of their strategy choices when dealing with a friend in situation 2, it was significant in dealing with a stranger. It seems that the Saudi UK respondents had learned to treat friends and strangers the same, seeking independence rather than involvement, while Saudi KSA tried to intensify their relationship with the other person; this is also evidence of a different rapport orientation between the two Saudi groups.

7.2.2.3 Situation 4 (receiving a compliment on possession from a colleague)

You invite your colleagues to have lunch at your house for the first time, when they arrive, one of them says to you: "your house is very nice!" What would you say?

The situation is asymmetrical and symmetrical because it happened between colleagues, which may include both superiors and inferiors, and this suggests that the relationship is not equal or just colleagues and thus equals. Scollon and Scollon (2001) call this type of relationship one of deference because speakers are not affected by power but like to keep a distance, reflecting differing degrees of social distance between them. They also know each other quite well so they are not strangers. According to politeness theory, the use of negative and positive politeness strategies, like the 'others' strategy, suggests that the Saudi KSA felt threatened and that's why they used

'others' and deflection strategies more than their Saudi UK peers or British NS.

The Saudi KSA group used a higher number of other strategies which can be viewed as cultural and deflected more than either of the other two groups. Saudi KSA respondents seemed to use the positive politeness of acceptance to intensify and exaggerate the degree of politeness but also used 'others' because the compliment seemed to threaten their negative face. Some respondents mentioned that they wished their complimenter could get a better house than theirs. Wishing that the complimenter would acquire something even better is a ritualistic response that is supposed to protect the person receiving the compliment from evil spirits. This is somewhat similar to the phrase 'touch wood' in English which is supposed to ward off bad luck. Commenting on significant possessions such as a house is a sensitive topic and normally people would expect a blessing for those living in the house.

According to Leech's principles of politeness, responses in this situation showed modesty, approbation, agreement and generosity. Modesty was shown in the responses from the Saudi UK and British NS respondents through downgrading and giving information. Approbation and generosity were found in the Saudi KSA responses when issuing invitations and in the use of other uncategorised culturally based responses, for example, references to the evil eye, use of Arabic proverbs and ritualistic expressions such as *MashAllah*. Modesty makes one deny the honour of owning something and was seen mostly in the data of Saudi UK and British native speakers as neither responded to the compliment by boasting. Both groups (Saudi UK and British NS) tended to talk about the reasons behind their choices, give information and agree with the speakers in order to show their humbleness.

This was not found in Situation 2, which involved a fictional friend. This may indicate that the deference face system (by contrast with solidarity) led them to emphasise their humility when being complimented about something of considerable value, like a home, rather than just a nice watch. It

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is also a potentially sensitive topic between colleagues, earning a wage in the same workplace, and therefore one cannot fully predict or understand the reasons behind those responses.

Scollon and Scollon (2001) suggested that deference relations increase the use of negative politeness, and this was true in this case. Fearing 'envy' and the evil eye affected the positive effect of the compliments and weakened the relationship between the interlocutors. This could be due to the complimentee feeling threatened by the compliment itself. Spencer-Oatey (2008) proposes that responses which downgrade the value of the object sometimes indicate that sociality rights are evoked or that the topic is a sensitive one. In this situation, evoking protection from bad spirits implies that the compliment receiver did not trust the goodwill of the complimenter and consequently, the positive effect of the compliment is lost, and the relationship is weakened by this ritualistic act. With regard to the 'others' category, it seems that those responses occurred more in situations about abilities and performance, with the exception of this situation, in which there is an overlap between ability and possessions (owning a house on one hand, and being able to afford it on the other). Although the compliment was about something the hearer owned, it also implies the ability to achieve on a number of different fronts, such as: achieving wealth, selecting a good house and creating an attractive interior décor. In this situation, the responses categorised under 'others' include literal translations such as 'nice house for the nice people'; 'Or because you are in it'; 'Your eyes are beautiful'.

These literal translations from Arabic into English are examples of negative transfer. It seemed difficult for some respondents to find an equivalent for those expressions in English (see section 3.3.6.1). Their level of proficiency in English may mean they did not know and have prevented them from finding an appropriate equivalent, or those expressions may have best served the meaning they were trying to express. The Saudi KSA use of 'others' strategies provide some

evidence that the Saudi KSA experienced it as an imposition due to being sensitive. The politeness principles that were found in their responses were modesty, agreement, approbation and generosity. British NS and Saudi UK respondents used a number of responses that indicated that the most important principles for them were modesty and agreement. The preference for modesty by Saudi UK could be fear of the evil eye or that they do not like getting compliments from their colleagues. Their strategy involved trying to shift the focus from the house to something else. Saudi UK respondents seemed to not interpret these compliments as supportive, genuine or important in the way that their peers in Saudi KSA did and instead sought to re-establish their equality. This was significantly different from their peers: they were less inclined to enhance rapport. The topic and the relationship between the speakers are two important factors that influenced the strategies used in this situation. The sensitivity of the topic derives from the fact that owning a house is universally a lifelong dream and symbolises a comfortable life, although reactions to compliments about this will differ across cultures.

7.2.2.4 Similarities with previous situations

Behaviour in Situation 4 was not random because of the topic; there was a significantly different pattern of occurrence between the Saudi UK and the Saudi KSA respondents (similar to Situations 2 and 3). There was a preference for downgrading, suggesting that Saudi KSA did quite not feel comfortable. Saudis in the UK were more formal and did not establish phatic conversation or use offers and invitations as much as their KSA peers. The immersion environment seems to have affected their perception of what to say or what they thought was an appropriate response. In addition, they appeared to favour their independence regardless of their relationship with the speaker (see Situations 1,7,8,3). This was evident in previous situations, in which qualitative and quantitative analysis indicated the importance of showing their independence from their peers in their thinking and behaviour.

In Situation 8, one Saudi UK respondent commented 'I would honestly laugh and say something silly or funny like, oh finally I made someone in this family proud' while one Saudi KSA responded that they 'Just want to be like u (Thank you dad. Will always try to make proud of me)'. It is worth mentioning that these situations, (e.g., 4,8, 7) required compliments about performance or abilities. The data indicates that compliments about the self are not encouraged by Saudi UK as much as they are among Saudi KSA peers. This behaviour was also found in Asian countries, where compliments on abilities were not welcomed (Refer to section 3.3.3).

When Saudi UK responses differed from their KSA peers, they often resembled those of native speakers. This was evident in situations that involved interactions with a boss, classmate, friend, or colleague, which could indicate that Saudi UK respondents were able to change their behaviour more easily within these relationships after having lived in an immersion environment for a period of 9 months or more. This suggests that their ideas about sociality rights and expectations are not as strongly held as their religious beliefs. For example, the interesting responses to a compliment from a father (Situation 8) have roots not only in their sociality rights and expectations but also their religious beliefs

7.2.2.5 Summary

Although the acceptance rate was high among all groups, Saudi KSA tended to use 'others' strategies the most. The Saudi UK respondents were conservative and modest compared to their KSA peers, who seemed to like being complimented on their house but also were threatened by the compliment topic. There was a significant difference in use of the 'others' category and returning compliments between the two Saudi groups. Most Saudi KSA respondents enhanced their rapport with a stranger or a colleague while Saudi UK and British NS respondents-maintained rapport or neglected it equally.

Saudi UK respondents seemed to express independence more than enhance rapport in situations where Saudi KSA did. Reward power affected responses in Situation 7, which could explain the high rate of acceptance with a lower rate of deflection. Deflection of a compliment in this case would mean that the respondent did not think they deserved the promotion for their hard work, which is unlikely to occur. The same was found in a Persian study, in which compliments about work were accepted because rejection or deflection would reflect badly on the participants' self-image (see section 3.3.4)

7.3 Strongly held values

The second major theme found in the results was the role of strongly held values. There was little evidence of cultural adaptation in the behaviour of the Saudi UK respondents despite being in an immersion environment. Their behaviour did give some indication of a change but there was no significant cultural adaptation, as has been discussed for situations 1,7,8,3,4.

7.3.1 Held values:(judgement in learning environments)

Strongly held values in relation to compliments on abilities in learning environments were found in Situations 6 and 9. These situations shared a theme that seems to be linked to imposition and reward power. These situations show that the respondents used three politeness strategies (Holmes 1986) to respond to compliments and one undefined strategy which has been referred to as 'others' (see chapter 3 section 4.9.15). The results could be explained in terms of the ranking of imposition as one of the factors that are known to influence the use of politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987, Scollon and Scollon 2001). Other possible factors will be discussed as well.

7.3.1.1 Situation 6

Your English teacher tells you that your performance is improving and that she/ he is very satisfied with your work. What would you say?

According to politeness theory, acceptance, expressing happiness, interest and approval, telling jokes or making promises are forms of positive politeness strategies, while deflection (downgrade, shift credits) are negative politeness strategies. Negative politeness strategies (shift credits, promises and downgrade) were used by the two Saudi groups almost equally. Deflection is a form of negative politeness in which the respondents feel the need to show modesty. It seemed to affect the relationship between the student and the teacher the most, mainly because of the status of the teacher figure in the Muslim world and in Saudi Arabia in particular (see chapter 3 section 3.2.6.2). The situation involves an asymmetrical power relationship, as the teacher has greater power than the student. This suggests that there would be a need to minimise the imposition of dealing with a teacher in this situation, particularly in the Muslim world. In a hierarchal relationship, positive politeness strategies are expected, but in this situation, there was also a tendency towards negative politeness strategies (see chapter 3 section 3.2.6). According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), the use of positive strategies like agreement means that respondents are trying to be involved with the addressee, while the use of negative strategies shows a need for independence.

One strategy used frequently by both Saudi UK and Saudi KSA respondents was shifting credit whereas downgrading was popular in both Saudi UK and British NS respondents. For example, one Saudi UK respondent downgraded by saying, 'Thank you, I usually perform better under pressure.' It seems that the Saudi UK respondents in this situation learned to downgrade, along with other strategies such as shifting credit and 'others' strategies. This explains why the results were

significant between the two group of Saudis and the British NS but not between the two Saudi groups. In general, the two Saudi groups did not differ with regard to how they responded to teachers inside the classroom. (see chapter 3 sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.6.2) Acceptance and deflection rates differed between the two Saudi groups compared to the British NS group because Situation 6 involves a compliment from a teacher. No significant quantitative differences were found in the Saudi KSA and Saudi UK responses, mainly because the social variable that could affect this situation is power. As in Situation 6, the Saudis accepted fewer compliments and deflected more: it seems that the modesty principle was important influence in Situation 6. In terms of Leech's politeness principles, modesty and agreement seem to encapsulate Situation 6 for all groups and this explains the high rate of acceptance and deflection. Agreement +shift credit strategy was interpreted as a compromise between Leech's politeness principles of agreement and modesty.

The hierarchical expectations and power did not seem to influence Situation 6. The rapport-management model can help to explain why Scollon and Scollon's typology (2001) was not sufficient to explain the responses. It seems that categorising the responses as positive or negative or looking at the face system is not enough. Further factors needed to be identified that would explain the responses and the notion of rapport-management was useful in this regard. Teachers are considered prophet figures in Islam (see chapter 3 section 3.2.6.2). It appears that while the Saudi UK respondents changed their behaviour when a fictive boss was involved in the situation, their behaviour towards their teachers changed little. This could be explained in terms of beliefs. Alsalem (2015) in a similar study of Saudi students in the US reported that 'Saudi participants were more likely to transfer the credit for their achievement to their professor, to show self- doubt due to their L1 cultural values'. Alqahtani (2017) studied Saudi female students' experiences of adaptation and acculturation in the United Kingdom and reported that one of the academic challenges faced by the students was communication with their supervisors.

In particular, communicating with the supervisor was identified as a problem which was often linked to differences in the educational systems and expected roles of supervisor and student. The context of the situation, a learning environment, is crucial according to Spencer-Oatey, (2008). The situation involved a compliment on performance from a teacher, an interaction which is particularly important culturally in Saudi Arabia, as individuals are expected to meet the standards of a society and of a family. One way of meeting family expectations in a society like Saudi Arabia is by delivering a good performance at school or work.

The difference between collectivist and individualistic communities (Razek & Coyner, 2013) could explain why it was not possible for Saudi UK to change as much as for other social norms. In individualistic communities (e.g., UK), supervisors or teachers are seen as facilitators, whereas in collectivist communities such as Saudi Arabia, they serve roles that are rooted in Islamic and social beliefs. A good supervisor is seen as a role model who not only guides the students but tells them what they should do. This may explain why no differences in mind-set were seen in the Saudi UK group in this situation.

Alsalem (2015) found that the major difference between the two groups was their use of agreement with transfer assignment compliment response strategy: Saudis used it far more frequently (36.6%) compared to the American students (7.9%). The researcher proposed that while there were more similarities than differences in the linguistic behaviour of the two groups, Saudi students were more 'likely to transfer the compliment by giving credit for their achievement to their professor, regardless of whether they were male or female'(p.42). This confirms the importance and challenge to change of strongly held values in a learning context.

7.3.1.2 Situation 9 (Receiving a compliment on ability from a classmate)

You have just finished presenting your research project in class, on your way back to your seat, one of your classmates says to you: "you were great, well done!" What would you say?

According to the face system categorisation, this situation is symmetrical because there is no power distance between classmates, although there could be some social distance. In this situation, some individuals used downgrading, which is a negative politeness strategy. This suggests that the situation made the respondents feel imposed on (being judged in a learning environment) and therefore, the strategy was used by all of them. Compliments about abilities were found to be unwanted in some societies such as in Indonesia and Iran (see chapter 3 section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4). In addition, the learning environment seemed to be problematic because of social expectations and therefore all respondents felt relatively imposed on. While their responses, according to politeness theory, were categorised as positive politeness strategies in the form of appreciation tokens, most respondents used jokes and gestures. Using jokes is a way to claim common ground. Respondents also used gestures in a written format such as 'thumb up' or 'a wink'.

The politeness principle that dominated this situation was modesty: respondents were deprecating about themselves and minimise the praise given to them. Leech suggests that some principles can overlap. In this situation, the modesty principle cannot entirely explain why respondents behaved in a certain way. The agreement principle was also identified as active as some respondents agreed with the other to maximise agreement and avoid disagreement and cost to others.

The agreement principle could be the result of there being unavoidable judgment in this situation (assessment) which made respondents nervous, as they wanted to agree more than disagree to avoid imposition or to disqualify themselves. The overlap may be the result of strongly held values. In Islam, one is encouraged to be humble but show dignity (see chapter 3 section 3.2.4 and 3.2.6.2). Because there is deference in this situation with the existence of social distance, Scollon and Scollon (2001) expected the respondents in such circumstances to use negative politeness, which they did in this case. The more imposition they felt, the more they used negative politeness, and the less imposition, the greater use of positive politeness. The imposition here seems to come from being assessed on performance by classmates and the teacher. Respondents felt obliged to accept compliments as well as evaluations. It would have reflected badly on their self-image if they had rejected a compliment on their performance, as if they did not deserve it, whilst also having to accept it if it hindered their right to be equal. In a study of complimenting behaviour in Malaysia, respondents were more likely to reject compliments on personal achievements (Othman, 2011). This was also reported in the similar Persian study (Sharifian, 2008). Both communities share a similar Islamic culture with Saudi Arabia.

This situation showed once again that Scollon and Scollon's face systems (2001) cannot alone explain all situations. While there is no power between the speakers, the activity type required respondents to anticipate the existence of rewards, (in the form of grades) from their teachers (Situation 6) and evaluation from their classmates (Situation 9) for their performance in class. As with Situation 6, the learning environment in Situation 9 seems to be problematic because judgement (assessment) is involved and the compliment on a class presentation comes from the teacher. In these situations, compliments are strongly regarded as professional praise and criticism is regarded as a professional assessment of their ability. Ability and performance are

sensitive topics because of Saudi social expectations and interactional goals. For example, respondents feared losing grades because of their performance, which links to a reward power and the hidden role it can play in one's life.

Compliments are context-dependent and can also be positive evaluations of accomplishments. Alsohaibani, (2017: 259) pointed out that students felt imposed on because of the pressure to prove their abilities to others but also imposed on to accept the compliment because rejecting or deflecting it would deny their good work. Presentations in a classroom setting involve being judged by others and, in this sense, learning environments are face threatening. However, Spencer-Oatey (2008) provides an alternative explanation for the use of jokes and gestures (e.g., 'thumbs up'). According to rapport-management theory, the use of jokes is a way to enhance or claim common ground between friends and therefore serves to enhance rapport. However, politeness theory categorises hesitation and jokes as negative politeness. In order to decide which, one is true, one has to understand the end goal of these interactions and circumstances. It is likely that the respondents in this study did not use jokes and gesture as positive politeness strategies but because they felt their face was potentially threatened when faced with a public judgement.

Face sensitive topics are loaded with the fear of not being liked by others and social expectations left respondents with no choice but to wait for the judgement from others. None of the respondents could avoid this imposition because of the environment, so contextual variables such as activity type significantly influenced the choice of rapport-management strategy among respondents (Spencer, 2008:38). Also, using gestures is a sign that respondents want to maintain rapport but not strangely enhance it. Any form of talking is involvement, as Scollon and Scollon (2001) have highlighted, but by choosing to communicate non-verbally, there is a

possibility that those respondents, for various reasons, were trying to neglect rapport or maintain it to a certain level. One reason that has been suggested is that some situations involved imposition and violates their right to be left alone, as in Situations 6 and 9. Herbert (1989) reported that Americans were more likely to reject compliments than South Africans, not as an act of modesty, but because they felt that their equality rights were being violated by having to be judged by others.

7.3.1.3 Summary

Learning environments seem to be challenging places regardless of relationship type. In both Situations 6 and 9, the strategies used across the groups differed. Responses were not in line with the face systems presented by Scollon and Scollon (2001). In Situation 6, Saudi UK accepted, shifted credits and downgraded in a similar way to their Saudi KSA peers, but differently from British NS respondents. Deflection was more frequent in Situation 6 because of the teacher figure. In Situation 6, both UK and KSA respondents differed from the British NS respondents, probably due to strongly held cultural and religious beliefs. This suggests that with regards to cultural adaptation, religious concepts are not as easy to change as cultural concepts, which can fade as individuals interact in a new environment. Situation 9 is the only situation in which all three groups used downgrading and gestures to respond to compliments.

7.3.2 Strongly held values

7.3.2.1 Strongly held values: cultural background

Strongly held values were also found in Situation 2. The relationship in Situation 2, unlike Situation 5, was one of solidarity, while at the same time, like in Situation 5, did not involve power or imposition. Three strategies included in Holmes' taxonomy (1986) were used.

Interestingly, while there were no quantitative differences between the Saudi UK and Saudi KSA respondents, their micro strategies differed qualitatively. Information comment was the only strategy used in connection with Situation 5; below is a comparison of how the Saudi UK respondents behaved differently from their Saudi KSA, despite the lack of power and imposition. This difference could be due to the face systems expectation of solidarity vs. deference or to rapport-management strategies. This difference, however, was not the only interesting finding about these two situations. Although Situations 2 and 5 were not similar in terms of context, deeply held values were referred to in both.

7.3.2.2 Situation 2 (Receiving a compliment on sunglasses from a close friend)

One of your close friends sees you at the mall and compliments you on your new sunglasses; she/he says: “Wow! You look really trendy in those sunglasses!” What would you say?

In this situation, the strategies that are used the most are acceptance tokens, information comments and acceptance tokens+ returning compliments. In politeness theory, acceptance tokens are positive politeness strategies. Information comments and acceptance tokens+ returning compliments are negative politeness strategies, as they are considered as deference strategies. Giving information is a strategy that shifts the compliment from the self to the object and therefore can also be classified under the modesty principle (Leech, 2005). Acceptance and returning compliments in this situation are difficult to analyse because they can be used for various reasons. The first reason is that KSA Saudis seemed to favour enhancing rapport (Spencer-Oatey, 2008) by returning the compliments and offering to give their friend the sunglasses, while Saudis in the UK maintained rapport mainly by using acceptance tokens and agreement strategies. Nelson, AlBatal, and Echols (1996:424) explained that returning

compliments maintains rapport and equality and serves to bond interlocutors together. This could be the same for British NS, but the cultural background of the Saudi speakers with respect to possessions is rather different. The second reason could be that Saudis fear the evil eye, and therefore try to shift the focus from themselves to the item either by offering the item or returning the compliments. Again, these behaviours are categorised as a form of modesty which maximises benefits to others and downgrades benefits to self. These patterns of behaviours have also been reported in studies conducted in Kuwait and Iran (see sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5).

Leech's principles and politeness theory cannot fully explain the responses in this situation because Saudi KSA also made more use of other strategies that have cultural and religious connotations than the Saudi UK group (see sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.5). Personal orientation is one of the factors that can influence rapport-management (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Most of the responses of the Saudi KSA students seemed to enhance rapport by returning the compliment or offering the item as a gift. This significant imposition seemed to be part of understanding their association rights. By contrast, the Saudi UK did not seem to enhance or challenge the rapport, but rather, simply maintained it. Maintaining rapport occurs when the person does not make a lot of effort in a certain situation, which shows that this person is not interested in strengthening the relationship. Specifically, they did not offer the bag or the glasses to the complimenter.

Their reaction to imposition seemed to be part of understanding their equity rights.

The above discussion indicates that there is a cultural shift in the way Saudi English learners respond to compliments. The first evidence for this is that the Saudi KSA acted according to their cultural norms by automatically returning the compliments, while Saudi UK did not always return the compliment. Another piece of evidence is that there is a difference in their bald on-record strategies. Saudi KSA used pure cultural and religious references while Saudi UK tended towards exploring new ways of responding to compliments.

This case is interesting because the situation is supposed to enhance solidarity, with no power or no social distance between close friends. People are expected to behave in a friendly way with their close friends and, in normal situations, offering or returning the compliment is the expected act. However, the Saudi group in the UK chose not to enhance, but simply to maintain, the rapport. According to Spencer-Oatey (2008), there are factors that can influence the choice to enhance or maintain rapport. These are discussed in detail below with regard to this situation. In this situation, the power (-), distance (-) and weight of imposition are all (-). However, because the relationship is close, there is a chance of imposition in some cultures. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001), this relationship is referred to as solidarity and individuals would be expected to perform their FTAs baldly, on-record or use positive-politeness strategies. For English speakers, a compliment is an example of positive politeness, but for Arabic speakers a FTA may be involved: admiring someone's sunglasses may a) attract the evil eye and b) oblige the owner to offer the sunglasses to the person who complimented them, thereby representing a threat to one's negative face (see sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.6).

This leads to a consideration of the norms of intercultural communication in relation to involvement and independence. Involvement strategies include offering the object while independence strategies include giving people the choice not to offer the object. Saudis in the UK and Saudis in KSA seemed to favour using positive politeness strategies; in other words, they preferred involvement by giving information and discussing details of the items. However, a difference was found in their use of micro strategies: Saudis in KSA seemed to feel threatened and imposed upon as they used words to evoke God's protection. Their responses are classified as baldly on record for efficiency. Invoking protective words is an act with no threat minimisation because this damages the hearer's positive face. By contrast, the Saudi UK responses favoured positive strategies to minimise FTAs.

This seems to be in line with the evidences that Saudis in the UK are moving towards a new way of thinking and hence, do not perceive a compliment about their possession as a threat.

From a linguistic (rather than cultural) point of view, the Saudi students in KSA performed both pragma- linguistic and socio-pragmatic transfers.

The pragma-linguistic transfers included:

- (1) Reply using L1 words
- (2) Give information without looking beyond possible implications behind the compliment about the sunglasses.

The sociolinguistic transfers included:

- (1) Returning compliments
- (2) Offering items

Both are socially inappropriate outside their community. The respondents are aware that these situations do not involve Arabic native speakers (as indicated in the instructions), so the use of religious and social references is inappropriate in this case. Similar transfers were not found in the Saudi UK data: the respondents' socio-pragmatic competence seemed to overcome their social behavioural expectations and association rights. An example of social norms and behavioural shift sheds light on their new attitude towards equity rights and freedom from imposition. The questionnaire mentioned clearly in the instructions that the speaker does not speak Arabic and that the only language to communicate in is English. It is not clear if the respondents think that their 'friend' is Saudi or British and whether the respondents in the Saudi UK group responded in a more British way because they assumed that their friend in the situation was British and not Saudi.

7.3.3.3 Situation 5 (Receiving a compliment on possession from a classmate)

Someone you meet for the first time in class says to you: “your laptop bag seems really useful!”. What would you say?

According to politeness theory, agreement is a form of positive politeness strategy and deflection is a form of negative politeness strategy. The deflection in this situation was mainly in providing information (e.g name of the laptop shop). Acceptance token + information comment is relatively complex because there is an overlapping of interests. In terms of Leech’s principles, modesty and agreement are compromised but there is also a tendency towards generosity. Based on Leech’s principles of politeness, the Saudi UK group favoured agreement, while the Saudi KSA and British native speakers favoured generosity, alongside modesty and agreement. The information comment strategy was categorised as maximising benefits to others, and minimising cost to others, which comes under generosity. Modesty was also found where respondents tried to maximise benefits to other and be self-deprecating because the respondent does not benefit from this strategy. In this situation, downgrades were used by Saudi UK and British native speakers, as with Situation 9 (see chapter 6, section 6.6). In the classroom setting, Saudi UK respondents tended to use downgrades more than outside classrooms. Although not significantly different, Saudi UK also used downgrades and acceptance more than their peers in KSA.

Situation 5 is symmetrical in terms of face system, namely deference, which means that the expected strategy is negative politeness. This is because the situation states that the classmates are meeting for the first time and are therefore strangers. Saudi KSA and British NS used deflection more than the Saudi UK respondents. The acceptance rate, however, was high among all three groups. Saudi UK responses were surprisingly similar to those of their peers in the way that they accepted and agreed, but different even from British NS in giving information. The

pattern seemed to be that where a Saudi UK respondent agreed to a compliment, they also tended to give information the least. This pattern was also seen in previous situations. However, unlike in previous situations, this did not influence or mark any significant differences between the Saudi groups. (unlike in Situation 4). It is clear that Saudi UK respondents are in the process of acquiring new ways of thinking or that they are being influenced by it. There was not a single instance in which they resembled their peers in every aspect. Spencer-Oatey (2008) refers to sociality rights and obligations and how these can affect the strategies people use. One of the factors that influence their choices in a situation like this is their socio-pragmatic principles and beliefs. What distinguished this situation from previous ones is that while it discussed similar items such as possessions, the compliment was on an inexpensive item, which is different from compliments about a watch or sunglasses. In other words, the topic affected how people responded and made this situation the most diverse. For instance, this situation is similar to situation 1 in which the Saudi KSA responses were similar to those of the British native speakers rather than those of their Saudi peers in the UK.

In addition, not surprisingly, there were few significant differences between the Saudi KSA and Saudi UK respondents. In all three situations that took place inside the classroom (5,6,9), the two groups behaved in a similar way. Moreover, in all three situations, the Saudi UK responses were significantly different from those of the native speakers. In this situation, respondents tended to agree. The most preferred responses were agreement and acceptance token + information comment, which are positive politeness strategies that build harmony. The British NS group also accepted and agreed, much like the two Saudi groups, but the majority of their responses involved information comments (40%). It seems that the British NS group interpreted this type of compliment as a request for information about the object. This could explain why the information comment strategy was found in Situation 5 and not in Situation 2,

although both of them involved objects. Perhaps, a compliment on something inexpensive and the questionnaire including the word 'useful' in wording the compliment situation served to shift the respondents' mindset towards perceiving this compliment as a request to give more information about the product. Another important aspect of the Saudi data is the lack of use of religious phrases, perhaps because the item is not regarded as precious in Islamic and social norms in Saudi Arabia.

7.3.3.4 Summary

In general, it seems that compliments about expensive items are not treated in the same way as compliments about inexpensive items. Situations 2 and 5 both involved compliments about possessions but there was a difference between them in terms of strategies. The learning environment seems to have a significant influence on respondents' behaviour, whether the compliment is about ability or possession. There was a general tendency to reply with thanks to compliments about possessions more than to compliments about abilities. This pattern of behaviour was also found in Asian studies of compliments (see chapter 3 section 3.3.3). The use of literal translations from Arabic into English occurred in compliments about possessions more than in compliments about abilities. This was also found in previous studies involving Persian and Emirati Arabic students, who responded with acceptance because of their limited ability to expand, while when culturally sensitive topics were involved, students used their L1 to help to express their ideas, such as Arabic ritualistic expressions (see chapter 3, sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5).

7.3.3.5 Overview of situations

The results suggest that Saudi UK students behaved differently from their peers in many ways and that their immersion experience influenced their responses. Saudi UK respondents accepted more than their Saudi KSA peers. They also deflected less, gave information less and

were not as eager to use compliments to enhance rapport as their Saudi KSA peers. On the other hand, Saudi KSA deflected more and used ‘others’ strategy the most where culture and social beliefs were involved. The topic, social status and the learning environment affected the responses of both Saudi groups, something that was not as common among British responses. British NS accepted the most and downgraded where expected to do so (e.g., by using downgrading to respond to compliments on possessions). British NS were sensitive and reluctant to accept compliments about abilities, but happily and modestly welcomed and accepted compliments about possessions. Cedar (2016) in a study on Thai and Indonesian compliment responses, reported this diversity as compliment topics affected both groups differently: Indonesians were most positive towards compliments about ability but negative towards compliments about possessions, whereas Thais were positive towards compliments about possessions but negative about compliments on appearance. In other words, in this study, the Saudi groups seemed to resemble the patterns of behaviour displayed by the Indonesians, which is not a surprise since they share social norms that are derived from Islam. The British NS respondents resembled the Thai respondents of the same study in relation to possessions.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, nine situations involving compliment responses were discussed in the light of the data and theoretical frameworks. The two major emerging themes from the data were the extent of cultural adaptation and strongly held values. These themes categorised responses to shed light on their connection to the theories of the current study. Findings related to studies from literature were also linked to further illustrate the meaning of the responses obtained in comparison with other studies in different contexts. A summary of the key findings was presented at the end to highlight the differences and similarities found across the three groups and between the two Saudi groups. In this way, the chapter has addressed the research questions of the study. The next chapter will present the conclusion to this project.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, the main findings were discussed in relation to the research questions and objectives of the study. In this conclusion, the findings will be summarised along with implications, contributions and limitations.

The research reported in this thesis investigated the use of compliment and compliment responses by Saudi KSA, Saudi UK and British NS. Two Saudi groups were compared in immersion and non-immersion environments within the framework of politeness theory, Leech's principles of politeness and Spencer-Oatey's rapport-management framework, with the British native speaker group as the control group. Based on Yuan's (2002) taxonomy of compliment production and Holmes' (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses, open-ended DCTs were employed open-ended DCTs to elicit responses from participants.

This chapter begins with a summary of the main results pertaining to each research question.

1. What are the characteristics of Saudi learners' complimenting behaviour in English? Saudi English learners in KSA preferred to enhance rapport while Saudi English learners in the UK refrained from enhancing rapport and showed more awareness of the context than their KSA peers. British native speakers' complimenting behaviour consisted of a preference for asking questions about items or giving information about the items complimented on.

2. Does this complimenting behaviour differ between the two groups of Saudi learners of English (Saudi UK and Saudi KSA), and between these two Saudi groups and native speakers of English? If so, how? Yes, it differed between the two Saudi groups and also from those of British NS. The reasons found behind these difference were that Saudi KSA incorporated some social beliefs more than their UK peers. Saudi UK seemed to be influenced by their immersion experience by showing independence and awareness of context. However, Saudi UK showed some differences from the British NS which caused speculations that there was a change of behaviour but not consistently and not on all levels.

3. What are the possible reasons behind the use of social and religious references in compliment strategies? For Saudi KSA, the possible reasons are their low level of English proficiency and their strongly held values and beliefs. For Saudi UK, social and religious references were less frequent suggesting that some of these values had begun to fade either after being in an immersion environment or being geographically distant from Saudi values. The Saudi UK level of English was also more sophisticated than that of their KSA peers.

Next is a summary of the findings in relation to compliment production.

8.2 Compliment production

In compliment production, Saudi KSA showed a tendency towards the use of explicit compliments in situations in which power and imposition are irrelevant. In Situation 1 (meal), Saudi KSA respondents enquired about the food in order to show appreciation of good hospitality, enhancing rapport and being friendly. Saudi UK and British NS respondents showed enthusiasm but did not exaggerate their compliments as much as the Saudi KSA group. The topic of this situation is culturally important to both Saudi groups, yet the comparative analysis showed significant differences in their questionnaire responses. The Saudi UK group did not show notable enthusiasm, despite using a combination of explicit and implicit compliments.

Some cultural references were made by both groups of Saudis, although these were more common in the Saudi KSA data. Saudi KSA respondents continued to act in a friendly way when complimenting a friend on sunglasses (Situation 2). Although no significant differences were found between the two Saudi groups in this situation, showing enthusiasm remained more frequent in the Saudi KSA data.

A common feature of British complimenting behaviour in relation to possession was to enquire about the provenance or cost of the item. When complimenting a friend in a situation in which there is no power asymmetry and no imposition, responses from the Saudi KSA group seemed to be guided by the modesty principle, and for Saudi UK and British NS it was important to act out of approbation. This explains why the latter groups used negative politeness strategies as in asking for information, a strategy that was rarely employed by the Saudi KSA group.

When the social variables changed in that there was social distance between the complimenter and complementee, as in Situation 3 (complimenting a stranger on a watch), the behaviour of all participants changed. The topic of the compliment was sensitive because of the social distance between the speakers, which involved face threats due to possible impositions to both speakers and hearers. Complimenting a stranger might indicate that the speaker wants people to attend to their positive face needs (e.g. seeking approval), but the hearers might feel face-threatened at different levels. For British NS and Saudi UK who seemed to want to be left alone by adhering to their negative face needs. For Saudi English learners, the imposition also comes in the form of fearing the 'evil eye', as the item is valuable.

All groups used explicit compliments but also employed a good number of implicit compliments and avoidance strategies. A significant number of respondents opted out of

engaging in the act of complimenting, with some differences between the groups. Saudi KSA favoured explicit compliments; British NS implicit compliments; and Saudi UK opted out the most in this situation. However, all the groups also employed the avoidance strategy, albeit at different rates. The British NS respondents continued to utilise the information question strategy in this situation, as did the Saudi KSA respondents. Phatic talk was favoured by respondents in all three groups before giving a compliment to a stranger, as indicated in the comments that respondents made on their questionnaires, such as ‘self-introduction then I would say....’

This situation (3) was characterised by the use of negative politeness strategies, in the form of avoidance or information questions, which indicates the existence of a possible imposition due to social distance and topic. British NS and Saudi KSA respondents seemed to act according to the tact principle while Saudi UK acted out of the approbation principle, which applied to seemed to capture most of their strategies in this situation. The difference in behaviour of Saudi UK respondents in this situation seemed to be more salient regardless of the relationship, as they acted in line with approbation more than modesty or tact which both seem to underpin the behaviour of the Saudi KSA respondents.

In Situation 4 (compliment on a house), there were no power or social distance considerations to take into account, but the topic of the compliment involved an imposition for both Saudi groups. Whilst the use of an explicit compliment strategy was predominant, cultural and religious references were used extensively, due to the sensitivity of the topic in Saudi culture. Nonetheless, as in some previous situations, Saudi KSA used explicit compliments more than their Saudi UK peers. Saudi UK used implicit compliments more than the other two groups. Because the topic has cultural and religious importance, the two Saudi groups seemed to

employ a micro strategy of explaining and expanding their compliments. This is used in Arabic to convey and show sincerity: the longer the compliment, the more it shows sincerity. Lengthy responses could have been used in this situation to show goodwill, as the topic is sensitive. Saudi KSA used protective words to compliment a house more than their Saudi UK peers, whereas Saudi UK peers also expressed ideas that indicated the importance in Saudi Arabia of owning a house. The British NS group continued to use the information question strategy as in previous situations; this finding suggests that this strategy is strongly associated with giving a compliment in British culture.

For the Saudi KSA group, the situation was governed by Saudi social norms, as evidenced by the use of religious words. By contrast, British NS used information questions and Saudi UK respondents expanded the compliment by referring to the decor but did not use religious protective words. This significant difference with their KSA peers could be due to their awareness that the interaction was happening with non-Arabic speakers, or it might indicate that their adherence to social norms has weakened as a result of their immersion experience. Changes in Saudi UK language behaviour in previous situations suggests both of these reasons may be true. The topic of the situation seemed to affect the responses, as did the relationship type (work colleague) which might have raised a high bar of social needs to be fulfilled, such as owning a house. This situation may be interpreted as putting social expectations on colleagues as being equal and supposedly expected to afford the same lifestyles.

In Situation 5 (laptop bag), there was no power differential, as the interactants were classmates, but there was social distance and a possible imposition because the classmate was a stranger. In this situation, both Saudi UK and Saudi KSA respondents used questions the most, perhaps because the topic of the situation is not sensitive (laptop bag), and the ethos of a classroom can be assumed to be friendly. British NS respondents, as explained earlier,

favoured giving explicit compliments and asking information questions; Saudi UK respondents were the most likely to opt out. There was a tendency to use redressive actions because it is a first-time encounter and some respondents felt the situation required the use of negative politeness strategies or avoidance strategy. Redressive actions in the form of phatic talk and self-introduction were used across groups. These acts are supposedly governed by the tact principle of minimising cost to others by either being tactful or by refraining from responding.

In Situation 6 (classroom presentation), the majority of compliments expressed by all groups were explicit, and the most frequent micro strategy was expansion. Saudi KSA used friendly expressions and expanded on their compliments. Saudi UK also expanded and gave reasons for their compliments but used more sophisticated English than their KSA peers. For example, one Saudi UK respondent chose a combination of colloquial and quite formal vocabulary in this situation: ‘Great job! That was very impressive. You seem to be very well-prepared’, while one Saudi KSA response was ‘It’s a very nice project you deserve the full mark’. British NS expanded and explained their comments on performance. There was no power but some social distance for Saudi participants, which suggests that there was a possible imposition. The imposition of judgment could be universal, but it might also be specific to Saudi Arabia due to social norms that highly rate performance and place high expectations on individuals. By contrast with previous situations, here Saudi KSA used a significant number of implicit compliments, which indicates that they perhaps experienced the situation as potentially face-threatening, and therefore were more inclined to use negative politeness strategies. For example, some responses contained an evaluative aspect such as ‘well done’ and ‘you killed it’ and ‘proud of you’. These examples are a reminder that Situation 6 involves performance. It is the job of the instructor or evaluator to judge the performance, yet this implies a certain amount

of pressure on classmates. There is also a sense of competition in some responses, such as ‘you did well, but I will do better’.

Saudi KSA respondents showed enthusiasm and exaggerated their compliments, as in previous situations with friends and classmates: this seems to be the norm. Saudi UK and British NS respondents intensified their compliments but did not show much enthusiasm and acted according to the approbation principle of politeness, while modesty remained the most used principle for Saudi KSA respondents across the situations. Responses were governed by the approbation principle of politeness: participants chose to adhere to the face wants of others. This was achieved through explaining and expanding, as one of the Arab features of complimenting friends is to show sincerity and reinforce solidarity.

Compliment production situations showed that Saudi KSA respondents used explicit compliments and included micro strategies such as explaining, expanding, and information questions. Saudi UK respondents used both explicit and implicit compliments but refrained from exaggeration and enthusiasm. They also used the opting out strategy the most across the three groups. British NS respondents gave either explicit or implicit compliments, notably by asking information questions. British NS respondents also employed the opting out strategy when dealing with strangers, whereas Saudi UK respondents used it with both strangers and classmates. Culturally sensitive topics affected both group of Saudis but to different degrees and here the Saudi UK group showed signs of assimilation to British NS behaviour across all situations. Complimenting strangers seemed to be problematic, which has important implications for intercultural communication.

There was evidence of unease in all three groups when asked to compliment a stranger, even in the relatively informal context of a party. It was clear in all compliment production situations

that the behaviour of Saudi UK had been noticeably shaped by their immersion environment, was different from their KSA peers and not quite similar to British NS. The difference was evident through having different perspectives which, for instance, entitled Saudi UK to act out of the approbation principle rather than modesty principle in situation 6. They also showed an awareness by reflecting on the situations before embarking on any reaction, a trait that was notably lacking in the Saudi KSA group. Saudi UK behaviour was characterised by a clear preference to opt out, hold and be tentative regardless of the topic of the situations. This was found in a friendly situation such as in situation 5 as well as in culturally sensitive situations as in situations 1 and 4.

The next section gives a summary of the results relating to compliment responses.

8.3 Summary of the results in relation to compliment responses

In Situation 1 (the food), the topic seemed to affect compliment responses. Although there was no power or social distance in the relationship type, there were significant differences between the two Saudi groups. Saudi KSA respondents tended to use acceptance tokens while Saudi UK and British NS respondents tended to use agreement more. Both Saudi KSA and Saudi UK also used acceptance tokens + agreement, perhaps as a way of exaggerating or intensifying the compliment. Saudi KSA used invitations and offered food according to cultural hospitality norms, while Saudi UK did not tend to follow these norms. Saudi UK and British NS used agreement to express their feelings about the food while Saudi KSA issued invitations.

These patterns of differences between the Saudi UK responses and Saudi KSA responses suggest that Saudi UK students were adopting new ways of behaving, particularly in culturally rich situations such as making compliments about food. Positive politeness strategies were employed by all groups, underpinned by different principles. Saudi KSA respondents favoured generosity and modesty while Saudi UK and British NS respondents favoured agreement and

modesty principles. There were many examples of negative pragmatic transfer from L1 in the Saudi KSA data, perhaps because in some situations respondents felt they could not deliver the intended message in English. The difference between the two Saudi groups seemed to be on the value placed on social expectations, as Saudi KSA respondents tried to enhance rapport (exaggerate, intensify) and Saudi UK maintained it (agree and accept).

In Situation 2, all groups accepted the compliments about the sunglasses, but both Saudi groups were more likely to return the compliment and/or pose information questions than the British NS. Saudi KSA were the most likely to return the compliment: their use of this strategy is in keeping with social norms when receiving a compliment, as a way to deflect it. British NS enquired about the item, as did Saudi UK respondents, although the latter also returned compliments, albeit at a lower rate than the Saudi KSA respondents.

Saudi UK responses can be positioned halfway between the British NS and Saudi KSA respondents in that positive politeness strategies were used to accept compliments, but social norms were seen in the giving of information and returning compliments. As in previous situations, Saudi KSA respondents favoured acceptance and sought to enhance rapport. Because compliments on possessions are sometimes sensitive, some Saudi KSA participants used specific religious and cultural phrases commonly used to protect the complimenter from 'evil spirits. Noticeably, Saudi UK respondents did not use these references. As in previous situations, it can be posited that this is evidence of both cultural adaptation and sensitivity towards intercultural communication. While there were no differences between the macro strategies of the two Saudi groups, as they both tended to accept the compliment, there were differences in their micro strategies. In terms of Leech's principles of politeness, the situation seemed to be governed by generosity in the case of Saudi KSA respondents (offering, returning compliments and giving information) and agreement in the case of the Saudi UK

and British NS respondents (acceptance by giving information).

In Situation 3 (the watch), there was a power and social distance factor involved as it was happening with a stranger, and this constituted a degree of imposition. Acceptance strategies were common across all three groups with a general preference for offering information. Some British NS respondents shared a story about the item complimented upon, while Saudi UK respondents provided information about where it was bought and Saudi KSA respondents offered information and returned the compliment. Evidence of cultural adaptation was found in Situation 3: Saudi UK and British NS respondents appeared to value modesty and agreement while Saudi KSA respondents employed the approbation and generosity principles by offering items and returning compliments. The use of negative politeness strategies such as deflection suggests that some participants did not feel comfortable receiving a compliment from a stranger on an expensive item. Participants also used small talk as a way to initiate a conversation with the stranger. The situation seemed to affect participants differently. Saudi UK did not appear to feel the need to adhere to the approbation principle, whereas Saudi KSA did. Responses from the British NS group suggest that enhancing rapport with a stranger was not seen as important and perhaps considered an invasion of the complimentee's personal space.

In Situation 4, the topic of owning a house seemed to affect strategy use. While the macro strategy used the most was acceptance, Saudi UK and British NS respondents employed the micro strategy of offering information: they accepted the compliment and then provided some information on the decor or other features of the house. Saudi KSA respondents employed 'others' strategy in that their responses included religious cultural references and invitations. Saudi KSA responses also often included protective words, suggesting that this situation implied face threats, at least to the Saudi KSA group. The prevalence of deflection and cultural and religious references such as the use of protective words (e.g. *MashAllah*) in the

Saudi KSA data suggests that the KSA respondents felt imposition in this situation, presumably because house ownership is a sensitive topic.

In terms of principles of politeness, Saudi KSA respondents showed generosity and approbation while Saudi UK and British NS respondents used modesty by downgrading and giving information. It can be inferred that in this situation, as in other situations, the Saudi UK respondents were exploring with a different identity for themselves in the immersion environment while Saudi KSA respondents' strategies simply reflected Saudi social norms, such as the fear of the evil eye.

In Situation 5, the compliment about the laptop was generally accepted across the three groups. Information comments and agreement strategies were used by all groups. There was no power or social distance to cause any imposition and the item was not as valuable as owning a house, so participants were more at ease in responding to the compliment. A difference between Saudi UK and British NS respondents was that Saudi UK respondents used more acceptance tokens. The learning environment perhaps influenced the Saudi groups in their use of more formal English, where in reality acceptance does not always have to contain acceptance tokens. In this situation, deflection was in the form of information comments which could be seen as acts of generosity. Participants also showed modesty and agreement as the topic of the compliment did not cause imposition due to social and psychological factors. Some participants favoured modesty where others enhanced rapport by showing generosity. Also, Saudi KSA did not use religious or cultural references in this situation, despite receiving a compliment on a possession. This could be because the object of the compliment (laptop) was not valuable enough to attract envy. Saudi groups did not differ from each other in terms of acceptance, but Saudi KSA respondents offered information as frequently as the British NS respondents. Saudi

UK respondents were more restrained than their KSA peers in their responses, a feature of their responses across all the situations.

Situation 6 also took place in a learning environment context but there was power in this situation in the form of potential reward power and an imposition of being assessed by a teacher. The compliment was positive, some responses involved deflection and ‘others’ strategies. Saudi UK respondents did not downgrade compliments as much as their KSA peers but shifted credit. Saudi KSA respondents used downgrade and shift credit the most while the most frequent response in the British NS group was to downgrade. In Saudi Arabia, the teacher has religious importance, and this seemed to govern the thinking of the Saudi groups. In this situation, there was a little difference in the responses of the two Saudi groups. Acceptance was less common, and deflection, responses seemed to be guided by the modesty principle. Some Saudi respondents used agreement and shifting credit which involves the use of two principles of politeness in combination: agreement and modesty. The rapport-management framework suggests that context can affect the use of strategies. As explained in chapters 5 and 7, the learning environment can be challenging for Saudi groups, and accordingly many responses followed social norms. Nonetheless, there was some evidence of some differences in the responses of the Saudi UK and Saudi KSA.

In Situation 7, the compliment on performance (promotion) from a boss was responded to differently by the two Saudi groups. Saudi KSA respondents employed a number of promises as part of their use of the ‘others’ strategy, while Saudi UK and British NS respondents accepted the compliment without shifting credit or making any promises. British NS respondents accepted the compliment and did not downgrade as much as in Situation 6.

There was power in this situation in the form of reward, but this did not seem to affect all

groups equally, arguably because, for Saudis, the power of a boss is not as influential as the power of the teacher in Situation 6. The acceptance of compliments was dominated by the pleasure participants expressed at being recognised for their hard work, which was marked by the usage of the word 'deserve'. Some participants used 'I deserved it' to respond to the compliment while this word did not appear in responses to the teacher. In this situation, there was a subtle but distinct difference between Saudi UK and Saudi KSA responses: Saudi KSA respondents enhanced rapport and used positive politeness strategies such as promises, while Saudi UK respondents accepted the compliment but did not show as much enthusiasm, nor did they enhance rapport or employ positive politeness strategies.

Saudi KSA respondents also used negative politeness strategies such as downgrades and 'others' strategies while Saudi UK and British NS respondents did not downgrade or promise as frequently, despite the reward power. There was also evidence of negative pragmatic transfer in the Saudi KSA data, in the occasional use of literal translations from Arabic.

In Situation 8, the fact that relationship type was that of father – child seemed to have a significant effect on respondents both socially and psychologically. Some participants did not expect to receive a positive compliment from their fathers or were delighted that they were fulfilling their father's expectations of them to be good sons and daughters and hence made promises. The power of parental approval and happiness is crucial in many societies which seems to be associated with the use of positive politeness strategies. In general, and similar to preceding situations, Saudi UK respondents agreed with the compliment but did not show as much affection or enthusiasm as their Saudi KSA peers. There was evidence of cultural adaptation in that the Saudi UK responses were similar to those of the British NS, who generally accepted the compliment without exaggeration or overt expressions of affection.

Perhaps Saudi UK respondents were asserting their personal independence by distancing from

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social norms through challenging or maintaining rapport rather than enhancing it.

In Situation 9, the compliment was from a classmate, about performance. There was no power or social distance and the majority of respondents accepted the compliment. British NS respondents often downgraded the compliment while Saudi KSA respondents used the 'others' strategy in the forms of jokes and gestures. Saudi UK and British NS respondents used similar downgrading strategies. The effect of the learning environment was evident in the responses of both Saudi groups in that they seemed to activate English forms that are generally used in a learning environment that they had picked up from English language textbooks. The strongly held values and social expectations around performance were also evidence in the responses of both Saudi groups.

There was an overlap of politeness principles in that respondents seemed to want to agree but also appear modest, so both modesty and agreement were evident in this situation. Appearing humble was important, so downgrading and jokes were used, but it was also important to appear dignified: some respondents felt the need to agree in order not to diminish the credit they had been given.

The role of the immersion environment was as clear in the compliment response situation as it was in the compliment production situations. For instance, there was not a single situation where Saudi UK responses entirely resembled Saudi KSA responses. The Saudi UK group did not automatically follow the British NS behaviour either, but they were mostly adapting to British NS or being halfway between Saudi KSA and British NS. The immersion environment seemed to affect both their level of awareness in culturally sensitive situations as well as their preference to refrain from showing too much affection.

8.4 Limitations

As in all such studies, there are limitations to the present research. The most obvious limitation was that the number of respondents was unequal due to the fact that the questionnaires were self-administered. The data collection tool was an open-ended DCT, which, it has been argued, does yield natural speech: this limitation is addressed in the methodology chapter.

In terms of the situations used as prompts for the production or receiving of compliments, while these were everyday situations, they cannot be generalised to specific workplace contexts (e.g., law firms) or different study environments (e.g., private Saudi universities). Although the questionnaire designed for compliment production emphasised that the situations involved non-Arabic speakers, the same was not true for the compliment response questionnaire. However, this did not appear to affect the responses in that Saudi KSA respondents transferred Arabic words in both questionnaires more than their Saudi UK peers. In other words, this emphasis in the compliment production questionnaire did not appear to increase participants' awareness that this interaction was supposed to be with non-Arabic speakers. The results generated by this data method are very specific and cannot be compared to data collected using a different tool.

Another limitation was that the Saudi KSA respondents were all students in King Abdulaziz University located in Jeddah, which is a metropolitan city that is relatively Westernised. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to all English language students in Saudi Arabia. The same can be said about the British NS respondents, who were all students at the University of Roehampton in London. Although the study concluded that there was a discernible change in the language behaviour of the Saudi UK students in that their behaviour seemed to similar to British NS group, this cannot be generalised to all Saudi students in other immersion environments.

8.5 Recommendations

The question regarding how Saudi students might acquire or learn the social norms in an immersion environment merits further investigation with regard to the underlying causes.

Teaching pragmatics using consciousness-raising instruction (noticing hypothesis) or corpus-based instruction is worth further investigation, especially in a non-immersion environment. It is recommended that English instructors in Saudi Arabia include in their classrooms and curriculum design discussion about the differences between Saudi and British complimenting behaviour and representations of politeness across cultures.

For a future research project, a different sample of Saudis in a sector outside of education would add more depth to studies of speech acts and intercultural communication as well as politeness research in the Saudi context; investigating how speech acts are performed in the field of international business, journalism, tourism and law would make a valuable contribution to studies of intercultural communication.

8.6 Future research

Based on the results of this project, the researcher is inspired to continue looking for the mechanisms of behavioural change in an immersion environment. In future research, the results of this study can serve as a basis to arrange focus groups with students who return to Saudi Arabia after spending time abroad. This would further explore the effect of this experience on the social norms that inform their language behaviour. Do they fall back on old social norms or has their immersion experience introduced them to new social norms and how have they adopted these as their own. The results can inform research into teachers' perceptions of the current results and teachers' proposals on how to improve teaching methods to incorporate the teaching of pragmatics.

8.7 Implications

In terms of methodological implications, the data were collected through open DCTs, which have not been used extensively in Saudi research before. The use of open-ended questions enabled participants to enrich the results with their responses and this helped address the objectives of the study. One of the comments made when presenting the results at a conference on the use of the DCTs is that maybe students did not know the nationality of the speakers and that their answers might have been different if they had known. As stated previously, in this study the questionnaires on compliment production included the wording ‘non- Arabic speakers’ while the questionnaire on compliment responses did not. Yet the Saudi groups differed in terms of the strategies used and there was an indication of behaviour change within the Saudi UK data. The qualitative analysis of the open-ended DCT tool to the analysis allowed these subtler differences to emerge.

The amendment to Holmes’ taxonomy is also an important contribution as the original taxonomy was unable to capture all the compliment responses found in the Saudi data. In terms of theoretical implications, most of the studies discussed in the literature, and specifically in the Saudi context, have used politeness theory and speech act theory to analyse the data collected on complimenting behaviour. In this study, an attempt was first made to incorporate politeness theory and Leech’s principle of politeness. However, the use of politeness theory was not enough to capture Saudi complimenting behaviour. The use of Leech’s politeness principles did not indicate the reasons behind participants’ behaviour. An attempt was made to incorporate the addition of a new framework (rapport management) which goes beyond politeness theory to describe the strategies found in the responses. This enabled a deeper investigation into politeness strategies and politeness principles as well as an understanding of what the participants were doing when giving or responding to compliments and which contextual factors affected their choices, and in what way.

For example, whereas Saudi KSA seemed to favour enhancing rapport, Saudi UK paid more attention to maintaining rapport, much like British NS. This finding was significant in terms of ascertaining whether the immersion experience had any significant effect on the Saudi UK students. Similarly, their use of fewer religious-based compliments when compared to their KSA peers helped to identify the potential influence of the immersion environment. The use of religious-based compliments to enhance rapport suggests that Saudi KSA respondents saw these situations as potentially face-threatening and were excited to save their own positive face and the hearer's negative face, something that Saudi UK respondents did not employ as much. The current study was also able to demonstrate that different compliment topics and associated cultural factors affected participants' responses. The study further revealed the importance of power in the Saudi context and how this might be addressed in intercultural communication.

In terms of pedagogical implications, there is a need to shift the focus from grammatical teaching to a more holistic way of teaching that includes the communicative aspects of a language. Some recent studies (see 3.5) have argued that implicit and explicit pragmatic teaching is beneficial in the Saudi context. Since these studies are recent and need to develop further, the current project can help to address challenging areas for language learners, such as dealing with strangers and the use of cultural references in intercultural communication. The study also demonstrated that noticing can be activated through exposure to immersion environments; this can be introduced in the classroom as a means of learning (awareness-raising instruction).

The behaviour of the Saudi UK students in this study can be used as a model to predict what social norms can affect intercultural communication. The behaviour of Saudi UK students can also indicate what areas need to be focused on and developed inside classrooms in Saudi Arabia. The teaching of pragmatics in Saudi Arabia would benefit from the incorporation of

politeness theory and speech act theory, with examples of their use in cross-cultural studies. It would be beneficial for students as well as teachers to discuss politeness behaviour across cultures through extracurricular activities such as in class role plays, as the perception of politeness is very different across cultures.

Based on the findings of the current study, compliment and compliment responses can be addressed in classrooms with the application of the noticing hypothesis. For example, students could be asked to fill in the questionnaires in Appendices 3 – 6. Teachers could then use a projector to show students a sample of their responses leading to in-group discussions about the choices they made. Teachers could experiment with two methods of teaching with two different groups; one of the group could be instructed to learn the different forms of complimenting and the other group to notice the forms of compliments using authentic materials without explicit teaching. The relative benefits of each method need to be evaluated. Teachers can also introduce students to possibly challenging situations, using the findings of intercultural communication studies, and draw on possible miscommunications unearthed as part of this study (e.g. the use of religious based compliments and compliment responses with non-Muslims).

Appendices

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference MCL 17/ 034 in the Department of Media, Culture & Language and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 24.07.17.

Appendix 1

KING ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
WOMEN'S COLLEGES CAMPUS
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH UNIT



ELI
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز
 معهد اللغة الإنجليزية
 شئون الفروع
 وحدة البحث العلمي

Data Collection Permission Form

This form has to be filled by the researcher and approved by the Head of the Scientific Research Unit and the Vice-dean of ELI at Women's Colleges.

Part I: Researcher's Statement of Commitment

Researcher's Name	Sarah Alamri	
KAU ID	00014186	
Research Title	A Comparative Study: Exploring the Speech Acts of Compliment and Compliment Responses by Saudi English Learners.	
Participants (level/number of students)	Saudi English learners (females and males) based in Saudi Arabia- Level 4 (+100)	
Number of Sessions/Hours	Varies - depend on the initial results	
Data Collection Instrument (questionnaire, interview, classroom observation, etc)	Surveys	

I confirm that I will fully address the following ethical issues:

- The participant is given enough information about the purpose of the research; the reason why she was chosen to participate; and the place, time, duration and frequency of data collection sessions.
- Participant is made aware that she can withdraw from the study at anytime. (However students cannot withdraw from classes wherein data collection has been approved by ELI).
- The participant is reassured of anonymity and confidentiality issues.
- Sufficient precautions will be taken in the processing and storage of confidential material (interviews, completed questionnaires, written samples/reflections).

Researcher's signature
 Sarah Alamri _____

Date
 07-12-2017 _____

Part II: Approval

Vice-Dean
 Dr. Nouf AlKhatabi
 Signature: _____
 Date: _____

Head of Scientific Research Unit
 Dr. Fatima Basaffar
 Signature: _____
 Date: _____

Appendix 2

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: A Comparative Study: Exploring the Speech Act of Compliment and Compliment Responses by Saudi English Learners.

Brief Description of Research Project, and What Participation Involves:

The purpose of this study is to explore giving and responding to compliments by Saudi Arabic- speaking learners of English. If you are willing to participate, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions in an online survey.

The survey should take no more than about 10-12 minutes. The survey will be completed by three types of participants: Saudi Arabic speakers, Saudi Arabic speakers who are English learners, and English native speakers.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name: Sarah Alamri Department:
Media, Culture and
Language. University Address: Grove
House, Roehampton Lane, London,
Postcode: SW15 5PJ
Email: Alamris@roehampton.ac.uk
Mobile number ; 00447714441448

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Name Sarah Alamri.....

Signature

Date

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.) However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Name: Mark Garner
Department; MCL
University Address: 046 Parkstead House

Postcode SW15 4JD
SW155NY
Email:
mark.garner@roehampton.ac.uk

Telephone: (0)20 8392 3501

Head of Department Contact Details:

Name Loudres Melcion
Department MCL
113 Queens's
Southlands
Postcode

Email l.melcion@roehampton.ac.uk

Telephone (0) 208392

Appendix 3

My name is Sarah Alamri and I am a PhD student at the University of Roehampton in London, United Kingdom. For my research, I am looking for English native speakers to investigate their ways of responding to situations in English. This survey will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Department: Media, Culture
and Language. University
Address: Grove House,
Roehampton Lane, London,
Postcode: SW15 5PJ
Email: Alamris@roehampton.ac.uk

If you agree to take part in my study, you must make sure to click “Done” button at the end in order to confirm and participate in the online survey. If you wish to withdraw at any time, you can do so by exiting the survey.

Please be aware that the data will remain anonymous, and your responses will be confidential.

Please write what you would say in the following situations. There is no right or wrong answer, so please respond to the situations described as you would in an every-day real-life situation.

1. Please confirm you are 18 years old or over.
2. What is your age? 18-35, 35-50, +50
3. What is your gender? Female, Male
4. What is your education level? Undergraduate (BA), Postgraduate (MA, PhD)

5. Your friends invited you over to dinner. You like the food, what would you say to your friend?
6. You see one of your close friends at the mall and you like her/ his new sunglasses; what would you say?
7. You are at a party and you see someone for the first time with a nice watch. What would you say to her/ him about their watch?
8. One of your colleagues invited you to have lunch at his/ her house for the first time, when you arrive, you like their house. What would you say to your colleague?
9. You meet a classmate for the first time in class and like his or her laptop bag; what would you say to him or her?
10. Your classmate just finished presenting his or her research project in class which you thought was really good, on their way back to seat, what would you say to them about their presentation?

Appendix 4

My name is Sarah Alamri and I am a PhD student at the University of Roehampton in London, United Kingdom. For my research, I am looking for English native speakers to investigate their ways of responding to situations in English. This survey will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Department: Media, Culture
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Address: Grove House,
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Postcode: SW15 5PJ
Email: Alamris@roehampton.ac.uk

If you agree to take part in my study, you must make sure to click "Done" button at the end in order to confirm and participate in the online survey. If you wish to withdraw at any time, you can do so by exiting the survey.

Please be aware that the data will remain anonymous, and your responses will be confidential.

Please write what you would say in the following situations. There is no right or wrong answer, so please respond to the situations described as you would in an every-day real-life situation.

1. Please confirm you are 18 years old or over.
2. What is your age? 18-35, 35-50, +50
3. What is your gender? Female, Male
4. What is your education level? Undergraduate (BA), Postgraduate (MA, PhD)

1. You invited your friends over to dinner. After they finish, one of them says to you: "the food was wonderful!" What would you say?
2. One of your close friends sees you at the mall and compliments you on your new sunglasses; she/he says: "Wow! You look really trendy in those sunglasses!" What would you say?
3. You are at a party: you are introduced to someone you have not met before, who says, "I love your watch". What would you say?
4. You invite your colleagues to have lunch at your house for the first time, when they arrive, one of them says to you: "your house is very nice!" What would you say?
5. Someone you meet for the first time in class says to you: "your laptop bag seems really useful!". What would you say?
6. Your English teacher tells you that your performance is improving and that she/he is very satisfied with your work. What would you say?
7. Your boss tells you that she is giving you a promotion for all the hard work you have done. What would you say?
8. Your father compliments you on your high grades at school, saying: "I'm proud of you, you are the role model to your sisters and brothers". What would you say?
9. You have just finished presenting your research project in class, on your way back to your seat, one of your classmates says to you: "you were great, well done!" What would you say?

Appendix 5

My name is Sarah Alamri and I am a PhD student at the University of Roehampton in London, United Kingdom. For my research, I am looking for Saudi English learners to investigate their ways of responding to situations in English. This survey will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Department: Media, Culture
and Language. University
Address: Grove House,
Roehampton Lane, London,
Postcode: SW15 5PJ
Email: Alamris@roehampton.ac.uk

If you agree to take part in my study, you must make sure to click “Done” button at the end in order to confirm and participate in the online survey. If you wish to withdraw at any time, you can do so by exiting the survey.

Please be aware that the data will remain anonymous, and your responses will be confidential.

Please write what you would say in the following situations. There is no right or wrong answer, so please respond to the situations described as you would in an every-day real-life situation. The situations are all in English language with non-Arabic speakers. For example, you are talking to a friend or a classmate from America.

1. Please confirm you are 18 years old or over.
2. What is your age? 18-35, 35-50, +50
3. What is your gender? Female, Male
4. What is your education level? Undergraduate (BA), Postgraduate (MA, PhD)
5. Length of formal English learning? how many months or years?

1. Your (non-Arabic) friends invited you over to dinner. You like the food. What would you say to your friends?
2. You see one of your (non-Arabic) close friends at the mall and you like her/ his new sunglasses; what would you say?
3. You are at a party and you see someone (non-Arabic) for the first time with a nice watch. What would you say to her/ him about their watch?
4. One of your (non-Arabic) colleagues invited you to have lunch at his/ her house for the first time. When you arrive, you like their house. What would you say to your colleague?
5. You meet a (non-Arabic) classmate for the first time in class and like his or her laptop bag; what would you say to him or her?
6. Your (non-Arabic) classmate just finished presenting his or her research project in class which you thought was really good. On their way back to their seat, what would you say to them about their presentation?

Appendix 6

My name is Sarah Alamri and I am a PhD student at the University of Roehampton in London, United Kingdom. For my research, I am looking for Saudi English learners to investigate their ways of responding to situations in English. This survey will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Department: Media,
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University Address:
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If you agree to take part in my study, you must make sure to click “Done” button at the end in order to confirm and participate in the online survey. If you wish to withdraw at any time, you can do so by exiting the survey.

Please be aware that the data will remain anonymous, and your responses will be confidential.

Please write what you would say in the following situations. There is no right or wrong answer, so please respond to the situations described as you would in an every-day real-life situation.

The situations are all in English language with non-Arabic speakers. For example, you are talking to a friend or a classmate from America.

1. Please confirm you are 18 years old or over.
2. What is your age? 18-35, 35-50, +50
3. What is your gender? Female, Male
4. What is your education level? Undergraduate (BA), Postgraduate (MA, PhD)
5. Length of formal English learning? how many months or years

1. You invited your friends over to dinner. After they finish, one of them says to you: "the food was wonderful!" What would you say?
2. One of your close friends sees you at the mall and compliments you on your new sunglasses; she/he says: "Wow! You look really trendy in those sunglasses!" What would you say?
3. You are at a party: you are introduced to someone you have not met before, who says, "I love your watch". What would you say?
4. You invite your colleagues to have lunch at your house for the first time, when they arrive, one of them says to you: "your house is very nice!" What would you say?
5. Someone you meet for the first time in class says to you: "your laptop bag seems really useful!". What would you say?
6. Your English teacher tells you that your performance is improving and that she/he is very satisfied with your work. What would you say?
7. Your boss tells you that she is giving you a promotion for all the hard work you have done. What would you say?
8. Your father compliments you on your high grades at school, saying: "I'm proud of you, you are the role model to your sisters and brothers". What would you say?
9. You have just finished presenting your research project in class, on your way back to your seat, one of your classmates says to you: "you were great, well done!" What would you say?

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